

Saugatuck  
Poplar Plains  
Connecticut





**Wilton Historical Society**  
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# Wilton, Connecticut : three centuries of people, places, and progress

Russell, Robert H., 1935-

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Hello Betty. I am a parishioner at St. Paul's and have done a fair amount of restoration work at St. Paul's and many of the other cemeteries in Norwalk.

St. Paul's was burned to the ground by the British in 1779, so very few records exist prior to that time and records after that are spotty until the mid 1800s. Over the years, many tombstones have been damaged or lost, and many graves were simply unmarked, particularly from the 1700s. We have no record of any Fitch being buried at St. Paul's - but it doesn't mean they aren't there, though. It is probably likely if it is referenced in the Selleck book.

Most of the Fitches in Norwalk, that we have record of, are buried in the East Avenue Cemetery. There are approximately 40 Fitches buried there, including Governor Fitch and many of his descendants. There is a Jonathon Fitch (youngest son of Samuel) who died 7/7/1773 on his 30th year buried there, but no Nathaniel.

At Union Cemetery, there are four Fitches: a Jonathan Fitch who died 7/27/1823 aged 47, his wife Sara Cannon, and a John Fitch 1838-1875 and his wife Sarah A. Hodge 1839-1894.

If you have any other names you want me to look up, I'd be happy to. Hope this helps.

best regards,  
David Westmoreland

-----Inline Message Follows-----

I am looking for a list of those buried in your cemetery. Is there such a list in print anywhere? Or does the church have any record of such burials? My husband is descendant of Nathaniel Fitch who died in 1743 and gave a donation to St. Paul's in his will. We have not been able to find where Nathaniel might be buried or other relatives of Nathaniel, children wives, etc.

Also have read the 1886 book about the centennial at the church. We have it in our Allen Co. Public Library in Fort Wayne. It mentions in a list of those that may have been buried at St. Paul's a one John Fitch. No other information except for his name. I need to determine just which John Fitch this may be.

I am looking for a transcribed list of those buried there if there is one. I will be glad to pay for it or for information where one might be found. We were in Norwalk many years ago for a visit, but was unable to obtain all the information that we needed at that time. Have learned much about the Norwalk Fitch family since that time, but the burials of many of these family members have alluded me.

Can you help at all??? Is there such a list in print? If not how do I find out more about the cemetery at St. Paul's without making the trip to Norwalk again? At this stage of the game I am just too old to travel that far. We live in Indiana. I do have a computer and have access to the internet, but I have never found a transcription of the burials at St. Paul's.

Thanks so much for you time.

Betty Fitch  
1122 Duesenberg Dr.  
Huntertown, IN 46748  
[Wfitch5413@verizon.net](mailto:Wfitch5413@verizon.net)





Betty, if I can be of help to you, just let me know. My mother is the geneologist in my family, which I'm so thankful for so that I don't have to do it! The 1886 address was by Rev. Selleck. Norwalk was lucky to have him as he documented a lot that would have been lost.

I'll keep my eyes open for Nathaniel - you never know. If there is someplace specific you'd like me to check, I'll do my best.

There was a small pox epidemic in the area between 1792 and 1793 - there are a number of tombstones that make reference to it. There are four children from one family buried at St. Paul's that all died within weeks of one another buried at St. Paul's.

David

dgwestmoreland@yahoo.com

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# FITCH TORY CONNECTIONS

Our John Fitch, son of John	John, son of Theophilus	Samuel's family
His father and grandfather were connected with St. Paul's Episcopal	Sister, Ruth married Daniel Smith, who died in New Brunswick Can. 1816 Tory	Connected to St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Norwalk a church of Tories
	Aunt, Lydia married Wm Boalt who either was a Tory or their son was one	
When John sold out he sold to James Fillio, a neighbor and on the Tory list	When this John sold out, he also sold to Tories, Esias Bouton family	
John himself does not show up on a church list but his family was Episcopal.	John appears to belong to the Congregational Church, so not a church of Tories.	
Neighbors and friends that were Tories connected with this John James Fillio Garner Olmstead Nathan Burwell David Morehouse, in jail The Taylors The Lockwoods		
Relatives Nathan Fitch The Bolts The Churches The Lockwoods	Relatives Nathan Fitch The Bolts The Churches	Relatives
Nathan Fitch 2 <sup>nd</sup> cousin	Nathan Fitch First cousin...both live N.C.	Nathan Fitch 2 <sup>nd</sup> cousin
David Bolt	David Bolt First Cousin	
Church family	Church family	
Rogers family	Rogers family	





# NEW BRUNSWICK TORIES – Tory Connections

These went to Brunswick at one time or another:

Person	Relationship to	Our John Fitch	Theo's John Fitch
Benjamin Burt, Sr.	Ancestor of Sarah Keeler		
Benjamin Burt, Jr.			
Nathan & Sarah Beers	Lived in Norwalk, probably Fairfield		
Job Burlock	Lived in Wilton		
David Burt	Lived, Ridgefield		
Joseph Burt	Lived, Ridgefield		
Joshua Burt	Lived, Ridgefield		
Rebecca Burt	Lived, Litchfield		
Theo Burt	Lived, Ridgefield		
Peter Quire	Lived, Fairfield		
Jesse Hoit, Jr.	Lived, Norwalk		
Stephen Hoit, Esq.	Lived, Norwalk		
Joseph Hanford			
Thomas Hanford	Norwalk		
Benjamin Jarvis			
John Jarvis			
Munson Jarvis			
John Marvin			
Raymond Marvin			
Grace Marvin			
Hannah Marvin			
Isaac Marvin			
James Marvin			
Mary Marvin			
Samuel Marvin			
Silas Marvin			
Anthony Rogers			
Anthony Rogers, Jr.			
Elizabeth Rogers	Sister of Thomas		
James Rogers			
Nehemiah Rogers	M: Eliz Fitch		
Samuel Rogers	Son, Eliz and Neh		
Fitch Rogers	Son, Eliz and Neh		

*Daniel Smith*

*married Sister Ruth*

1781 Tory List from Norwalk

Hezekiah Belden	<i>Wilton</i>		
John Belden	<i>Wilton</i>		
David & Wm Bolt		2 <sup>nd</sup> cousin	1 <sup>st</sup> cousin
Nathan Burwell	Wilton, Pop. Plains	Close neighbor	
Ebenezer Church	M: Susanna Fitch		
Thomas Fairweather			
James Fillio	Poplar Plains	Next door neighbor	
Nathan Gregory	<i>Wilton</i>		
Thomas Hanford	<i>Wilton</i>		

*r. Paul's -*

*t. Paul's*

*, Paul's -*





Gould Hoyt	St. Paul member		
Nathan Jarvis			
David Lambert	M: Rogers, dau. Eliz & Nehemiah (Susannah)		
Edward Nash			
Garner Olmstead	Wilton	Close neighbor and friend of family	
Richard Partrick	Saugatuck	Close neighbor of Nathaniel and kids	
Gershon Raymond			
John Sanders, Jr.	St. Paul's church		
Phillip Scribner			
Peter White			
Abe Whitney	Wilton		
Hezekiah Whitney 2	Wilton		
Obadiah Wright			
Nathan Fitch	New Canaan	Prob. cousins	Cousin

Joseph Olmsted      Father of Garner      may have signed  
Eliz, Elis will

Gideon Lockwood	Weston	Eliz's Brother
Albert "	"	" "
Ephraim "	"	" "
Taber "	"	" "

Jared Betts	Wilton
Stephen Keeler	Bald Hill



## TORY LIST OF 1781 OF POSSIBLE FRIENDS AND RELATIVES OF JOHN FITCH

### NATHAN FITCH

1. Nathan Fitch, born 1739  
father: Matthew Fitch  
mother: Lydia Olmstead, dau. of Nathan Olmstead and Mercy Comstock  
Lived in New Canaan  
2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> cousin to John Fitch  
1781, on inimical list of Tories
2. Nathan Fitch, born 1761  
father: Nathan Fitch  
mother: Mehitable Hoyt
3. Nathan Fitch was a convicted Tory  
He relented in 1777 at Stamford and was allowed to return home  
He paid 1,000 pounds for the privilege  
But later found on the 1781 list, so did he really relent??  
One Nathan Fitch served in the Rev. Army from Stamford in 1779  
There may be more than one Nathan Fitch  
Co-horts in 1777: Goold Hoit, Frank Smith, Stephen Keller/Keeler  
John Betts.

### NATHAN BURWELL

1. Nathan Burwell, born July 28, 1705  
father: Samuel Burwell  
mother: Rebecca Bunnell  
married to Sarah Raymond, born 1711  
(Friend of John Fitch, witness to 1768 land contract, and signer  
of the will of Elizabeth (Beers) Fitch Ellis)  
Dec. 1765, Nathan Burwell, Jr. to collect Mr. Leaming's rate  
1781, on inimical list of Tories

### GARNER OLMSTEAD

1. Gardner Olmstead, born about 1716, died before 5-7-1790 at Poplar Plains  
father: Joseph Olmstead  
mother: Mehitable Warner  
married: Phebe Olmstead, 1720 dau. of John, married 1738  
Garner Olmstead was a signer of the will of Elizabeth (Beers) Fitch Ellis  
Dec. 1769, Garner Olmsted to collect Mr. Leaming's rate  
Dec. 1773, Garner Olmsted to collect Mr. Leaming's rate  
Dec. 1774, Garner Olmsted to collect Mr. Leaming's rate  
1781, on inimical list of Tories

### JOSEPH OLMSTEAD

1. Joseph Olmstead, born 1744  
father: Gardner Olmstead  
mother: Phebe Olmstead  
(A Joseph Olmstead also signed the will of Elizabeth Beers Fitch Ellis)  
1781, on inimical list of Tories





## **JAMES FILLIO**

1. James Fillio  
married Mary Olmstead, prob. the daughter of Garner and Phebe  
In 1787 he bought 16 acres of land at Poplar Plains from John Fitch  
1781, on inimical list of Tories

## **EBENEZER CHURCH**

1. Ebenezer Church, born 1718, died 1799, married Susannah Fitch  
prob. daughter of Samuel Fitch and Susannah  
Dec. 1766, Ebenezer Church to collect Mr. Leaming's rate  
Dec. 1775, Daniel Church, collector of ye professors of ye Church of  
England (Daniel is Ebenezer and Susannah's son)
2. Ebenezer Church, born 1758, son of Ebenezer Church and Ruth Raymond  
(Susannah Fitch had died after 2 children)  
1781, on inimical list of Tories

## **GIDEON LOCKWOOD**

1. Gideon Lockwood, brother of Elizabeth Lockwood who married John Fitch  
making him brother-in-law. He was a known Tory, but did finally serve  
for the Patriots in the Rev. War.

## **ALBERT LOCKWOOD**

1. Albert Lockwood, brother of Elizabeth Lockwood, brother-in-law to John  
Fitch and known Tory

## **EPHRAIM LOCKWOOD**

1. Ephraim Lockwood, brother of Elizabeth Lockwood, brother-in-law to John  
Fitch and known Tory.

## **OBADIAH WRIGHT**

1. Obediah Wright, born about 1747  
married Sarah Adams about 1767  
1781, on inimical list of Tories

## **THOMAS HANFORD**



1. Thomas Hanford  
father: Elnathan Hanford  
mother: Sarah St. John  
Dec. 1764, Thomas Hanford chosen to collect Mr. Leaming's rate  
1781, on inimical list of Tories

## **NATHAN JARVIS**




1. Nathan Jarvis, born 1737, died 1820  
father: Samuel Jarvis  
mother: Naomi Brush  
married Anne Kellogg about 1757




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CENSUS VIEWER	
2	James M. M.
2	Robert M.
	Little M.
4	Robert M.
	Quentin M.
5	Robert M.
	Or
6	Robert M.
	Or
	Or
	Robert M.
	Or
7	Howard M.

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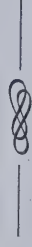
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# WILTON CONNECTICUT



THREE CENTURIES OF PEOPLE,  
PLACES, AND PROGRESS

ROBERT H. RUSSELL

*Published by the  
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## Chief Chicken

Many prominent Indians who lived in the Norwalk area have left their names on landmarks in Norwalk and surrounding towns: Winnipauk, Ponus, Catoonah (or Katonah), Compoe, Cockenoe, Wahackame, and Tokaneke, to name a few. But the one identifiable Indian in Wilton's history was Chief Chicken, variously known as "Chi-ken," "Chickens," "Chicken Warrups," and "Sam Mohawk." His ancestors seem to have been Mohawk, but Chicken came from the Golden Hill reservation in Stratford (now Bridgeport), which had been established by the colonial government in 1659. According to an account written by President Ezra Stiles of Yale (1727-1795), Chicken killed another Indian at Greenfield Hill in Fairfield sometime before 1714 and was banished to an unclaimed area between Fairfield, Ridgefield, Newtown, and Danbury, called Lonetown, now part of Redding. In 1714, Chicken signed a deed (for land that he may not have owned) to John Read, who later gave his name to Redding, declaring Mr. Read "Lord of the Manor of Lonetown."

In September 1720, it was reported to the governor "that an Indian living near Danbury called Chickens has received two belts of wampompag from certain Indians west of Hudson's River with a message expressing their desire to come and live in this colony." Two officers were sent by the governor to meet with Chief Chicken, inquire into the truth of the story, and see that he planned to attend the next session of the General Court to receive orders.\*

Chicken was well-known in Redding and mentioned by residents in their 1723 petition for a separate parish within Fairfield.<sup>†</sup> In 1724, Chicken sold all of the lands not previously patented by the governor to Captain Samuel Couch of Fairfield, reserving for himself fishing and hunting rights and "such land as the General Assembly shall judge necessary for my personal improvement."<sup>12</sup> It took the legislature another twenty-one years, after repeated pleas from Chicken, to grant him 100 acres. Chicken was getting restless with the increasing white settlement around him. Then, in 1748, his friend John Read gave him 200 acres in the town of Kent in exchange for his Redding land, and Chicken happily moved north to join the Schaghticoques. Chicken's grandson, Tom Warrups, a colorful character, served as a soldier and messenger (and chief plunderer of local farms) for General Putnam at his Redding camp during the Revolution. A large overhanging rock about a mile north of Georgetown was his frequent shelter and in 1880 was still known as Warrups Rock.<sup>13</sup>

\* It is not recorded whether Chicken actually met with the General Court.

<sup>†</sup> This petition was denied. In 1729, three years after Wilton Parish was organized, Redding

Although Chicken never lived in Wilton, he established a trail through town in his travels to visit Chief Ponus in Canaan Parish (now New Canaan) and to reach the shores of Long Island Sound to fish. Chicken Street formerly extended to Danbury Road in Georgetown, but only the southern portion retains the name, one of just two Indian-named roads in Wilton.\*

## Wilton Land

Danbury, more distant from the shore and closer to threats from unfriendly Indians, was bought from the Indians by Norwalk men and settled in 1685. Ridgefield, to our north, was also bought from the Indians, primarily by Norwalk men, and settled in 1709. Yet Wilton, with the advantage of good river valley farmland and proximity to the shore, remained largely unsettled until the 1720s. One wonders why.

The answer lies in the fact that all of the Norwalk common lands, in which Wilton was included, were owned and managed by the Norwalk "proprietors," initially the first settlers and their descendants. New residents who were "accepted" were given "rights of commonage," thereby joining the group. Although in theory the commons were owned by all of the town inhabitants, the proprietors decided when to divide new areas of common land for sale, and in Norwalk they were very slow and deliberate in doing so in comparison to other Connecticut towns. By 1704 Stamford and Lyme had little common lands left but Norwalk had divided only 14,000 of its 67,800 acres.

When New York Governor Sir Edmund Andros attempted to take control of Connecticut in 1675, and again in 1687 in the name of King James II (at that time the Connecticut Charter mysteriously disappeared into the Charter Oak), there were great fears that the Crown might reclaim all undivided lands in Connecticut. As a protective measure, the General Court shifted the ownership of common lands in the colony from all inhabitants of a town to the proprietors as tenants-in-common.

The Proprietors Committee then became all-powerful, and Wilton remained without settlers. Each proprietor was given "rights of commonage" according to his present property value and his contribution to the community. The proprietors decided when to open up new lands for settlement, and the proprietors had first choice in purchasing those lands. Thus the rich got richer. The amount to which each was entitled was based on his rights of commonage; the sequence of choice was determined by drawing lots. New residents could only gain proprietary rights by purchasing them from existing proprietors. In 1698 a town meeting voted that each Norwalk-born son of a proprietor would receive a £50 right of commonage at age twenty-one.<sup>14</sup>





Unbeknownst to the early settlers, the land that made up the Wilton village was very special. Historian Bruce Daniels ranked the land productivity of sixty-nine Connecticut towns in 1690.<sup>16</sup> Only two earned the highest ranking: Wethersfield and Norwalk. Their abilities to raise grain, grass, and hay were superior, as were their pastures. Only five percent of Norwalk's land was stony and hilly compared to thirty percent in Fairfield and Ridgefield. In fact the dark rich soil that covered farmland from New Milford south through the Norwalk River Valley to Long Island Sound was known as "Wilton loam."

Norwalkers gave careful thought to the development of their virgin land. The slow population growth was both the result of and an influence on their land use decisions. In its first half-century, Norwalk's population did not grow appreciably, possibly as a result of its distance from Hartford or its conservative land granting policies. One study sets Norwalk's net gain in population between 1654 and 1704 at 1.5 men per year, while the number of children per family during this period actually declined from 6.2 to 5.4.<sup>16</sup>

### Settlement of Wilton

At the turn of the seventeenth century about two-thirds of the present Wilton was privately owned by Norwalk proprietors and others, but none of it was occupied by permanent residents. The other one-third, in the hilly north and northwest part of Wilton, was unsurveyed and remained common land until 1738.

The real impetus to the settlement of Wilton arose from the breakdown of the communal system of land holding. A Norwalk Town Meeting in 1718 granted "all undivided lands within Norwalk to the present proprietors in proportion to their present ownership."<sup>17</sup> The colonial legislature then reinforced proprietors' rights in 1723 by investing future control of all common lands in the proprietors alone.<sup>18</sup>

Potential settlers from the third generation of the original families and a horde of newcomers were clamoring for land that the proprietors now owned. As they began to realize the opportunities for profit, the proprietors divided and sold more common lands. There was a definite movement of younger men and newcomers to the lands beyond the Sequest Line to what became Wilton and Canaan Parishes; at least a dozen families settled in Wilton between 1700 and 1720. Land speculation was rampant among the proprietors, as the volume of Wilton land buying and selling activity far exceeded the number of actual settlers.

The first Wilton settlers established homes in the fertile Norwalk River valley and on the east and west ridge plateaus. The first permanent settler was **Jonathan Wood**, a weaver from Long Island, in 1706, the year of Benjamin Franklin's birth. Wood's reasons for uprooting his family and moving

religious preference, as the New York crown colony was becoming strongly Anglican (Episcopalian). He purchased farmland above Pimpewaug in a remote area and brought his family of seven children here. He was certainly a good judge of land; his farm became known as Egypt for its productivity and the fact that it produced crops that had failed everywhere else.

Finding the journey to the Norwalk meeting house impossible in many seasons, Wood in 1714 secured permission to attend at Ridgefield.<sup>19</sup> It would be twelve more years before Wilton would have a church of its own, by which time Jonathan was feeble and near death, dying in January 1727. His original house has not survived but another house was built on his home site at 555 Danbury Road about a hundred years later.<sup>†</sup> His five sons, Jonathan Jr., Isaac, Samuel, Titus, and Obadiah, married and established homes nearby. Jonathan Wood Jr. was a Norwalk proprietor. Jonathan Sr. and Jr. and Obadiah were all three signers of the Wilton Parish petition in 1726.

Jonathan Wood fits the description of "the lonely man in the wilderness [who] answered only to his family and the uncritical forest." Many town leaders frowned upon residents moving to the outlands as it was difficult for officials to exercise any control over them. The fast-growing families of Jonathan Wood's sons no doubt worried church leaders in the town center concerned with attendance at Sunday worship and the education of children, as they were "away from the circle of nature and order," and "newcomers without social connections in the center [of town]."<sup>20</sup>

**Benjamin Hickox** was one of the most noteworthy of the early settlers. A miller from Stamford and also a Norwalk proprietor, he built the first and longest-lasting mill in Wilton, a grist mill at the falls of the Falls Branch, now Comstock Brook, behind the present Congregational Church. Hickox and his friend Joseph Birchard, another miller, had joined in the purchase of Ridgefield in 1708, but for some reason sold their shares and settled instead in what would become Wilton. The mill that he built sometime between 1711 and 1723 operated for about 175 years until the 1890s and stood until 1938, when it was knocked down due to its hazardous condition.

Hickox married in 1714 and probably then built his house (no longer standing), which surprisingly was a considerable distance from his mill, being located on the east side of Ridgefield Road near the present Nod Hill Road. Ridgefield Road was not built between Drum Hill Road and the mill until 1734, so his commute to work would have been about two miles down Drum Hill and up Belden Hill to reach the mill. Hickox was a founder and one of the first two deacons of the Wilton church, holding

\* Attendance at Sunday meeting was mandatory, and the only church was the Congregational.

† House numbers did not exist at the time. It was 1958 before all Wilton houses were assigned





many important positions. He was elected as Norwalk representative to the colonial legislature in 1728, Norwalk selectman in 1730, and appointed justice of the peace for Wilton Parish by the legislature in 1734, a responsibility he held until his death in 1745. His place of burial in Wilton is marked by one of the earliest gravestones at Sharp Hill Cemetery.

**Samuel Keeler II**, grandson of Norwalk founder Ralph Keeler, was granted 50 acres in 1709 at Hop Meadow on Ridgefield Road, almost in Ridgefield, for erecting the belfry and hanging the bell in the Norwalk meeting house. He was another of the Norwalk men who purchased in Ridgefield and then came back to Wilton. Samuel joined the 1710 New England military expedition against Nova Scotia but he never joined the Wilton church. His son Samuel III joined in 1741.

Most of the other pioneers settled just north of the Sequest Line, closer to the old town. **Joseph Birchard** (or Burchard), a fulling miller\* from Lebanon, Connecticut and friend of Hickox, had in 1704 received permission for (but probably not built) a mill at what is now Grist Mill Road, about a mile south of the Sequest Line, which later became the Wilton-Norwalk boundary. Birchard joined Hickox and Samuel Keeler in purchasing Ridgefield land, then returned in about 1715 to settle in a house on the east side of Danbury Road near the present **Crumman Hill** Road and became a valued citizen in Wilton. (None of the eighteenth century houses on Danbury Road south of the Lambert house have survived.) His wife was Elizabeth Lambert, sister of David who arrived in Wilton a dozen years later.

In 1727 Birchard was the first man from Wilton to serve as a Norwalk selectman and later was Norwalk's representative to the colonial legislature from 1732 to 1734. He was also a Norwalk proprietor. For reasons unknown, he did not sign the 1726 Wilton Parish petition but was seated in the prestigious great pew in January 1727. Birchard died in 1755. His sons and grandchildren were merchants and tradesmen in Wilton, some of whom wove sieves from horsehair in the early nineteenth century. His granddaughter Charlotte and her husband Benjamin Gilbert wove sieves in their home, eventually establishing Gilbert and Bennett Manufacturing Company on Old Mill Road in Wilton.



Gravestone of Benjamin Hickox at Sharp Hill Cemetery.



John Keeler house at 468 Belden Hill. Photo c.1890 before reconstruction.

John Dunning, also from Lebanon, was a friend and brother-in-law of Joseph Birchard, having married Sarah Lambert, Elizabeth's sister. Dunning bought land in 1715 from Birchard and became his neighbor to the south, near the Sequest Line. He served as a fence viewer and tithingman as well as a selectman and proprietor in the town of Norwalk. He signed the parish petition and later served as local tax collector of the minister's rate (salary).

**John Keeler**, grandson of Norwalk founder Ralph Keeler, was the pioneer settler on Belden Hill, named for John and Samuel Belden, Norwalk merchants, proprietors, and major landowners on the hill that bears their name although neither ever lived there. Keeler was a Norwalk proprietor, who began accumulating land on Belden Hill in 1709 and built his house there after his marriage in 1714. His house has been rebuilt twice, in 1744 and 1895, on the original site at 468 Belden Hill Road, on the corner of Old **Belden Hill Road**.\* South of Keeler on the old road were the homes of **Nathaniel Ketchum** and **John St. John**, both also 1715 settlers in Wilton and proprietors from old Norwalk families. All three were founders of Wilton Parish.

In the former Indian Field on Chestnut Hill, Daniel and George Abbott II built houses on family land around 1710 and moved their families from

\* A fulling mill processed wool into yarn. The wool was taken to the mill to be cleaned, colored, woven, and fulled (shrunken), and pressed into folds, then stretched and dried. The

\* This was the only Belden Hill Road until the new Belden Hill Road was built in the late nineteenth century.





Norwalk. Their father, George Abbott, was a 1655 settler in Norwalk. Daniel was a man of very little property and his mark on early deeds indicates that he was unable to sign his name. By 1726, however, Daniel signed the petition for Wilton Parish and was assigned to the corner pew. George II joined the Wilton church in 1729 but died two years later.

Ebenezer Jackson married Esther Abbott of Norwalk, daughter of John Abbott of Norwalk, older brother of Daniel and George II of Wilton, and moved to Abbott family lands on the west slope of Chestnut Hill, now Dudley Road. Ebenezer was a party to the first reported crime of Wilton: Fairfield County Court Records for November 5, 1717 show that Mehitable Powell of Norwalk charged Jackson with fathering her child. Jackson refused to enter a plea but was found guilty and ordered to pay child support. At the same court session, he and his wife Esther were charged with, and pled guilty to, the charge of fornication, a punishable offense before marriage. The records do not show who filed the charges, perhaps a vindictive Mehitable. In any case, both Ebenezer and Esther were ordered to pay fines. Esther's father guaranteed payment.<sup>21</sup> The Jacksons later joined others from Wilton in one of the early migrations to the north, to Sharon, Connecticut, where Ebenezer was a deacon in the church and an upstanding member of the community.

When he died in 1688, Norwalker Robert Stewart also owned extensive lands in Wilton. His three sons, all Norwalk proprietors, inherited the land but did not divide it until 1711, at which time John Stewart, 45, a Norwalk surveyor, obtained as his share the former Indian Field at Chestnut Hill near the Saugatuck (Westport) Road. In another dozen years he built and settled there and was a signer of the Wilton petition. Farther north, Rev. Stephen Buckingham, also a Norwalk proprietor, owned 200 acres that had started with 60 acres granted to him when he was called to be minister in Norwalk in 1695. He never lived on his Wilton land at Buckingham Ridge, but gave it to his nephew and namesake, who became a founding member of the Wilton Parish.

The pattern that emerges is that the earliest settlers, except for Jonathan Wood Sr. and the Abbott brothers, obtained their Wilton lands by being proprietors in Norwalk. Over the next ten years, they were joined by another two dozen families and together they forged Wilton Parish.

### *Wilton Parish, 1726*

Wilton received its name in 1726, when thirty-one hardy pioneer families petitioned for a separate parish within the town of Norwalk. At that time, the name "Wilton" was selected, although in the more than 275 years since, no one<sup>22</sup> established with certainty how the name was chosen. The year 1726 was fifty years before the Declaration of Independence and six years before George Washington was born. Connecticut was still an English

colony and England was ruled by George I, a king who did not even speak English. The parish would of course be Congregational, as that was the only authorized denomination in Connecticut. Ironically, the Puritans who came to this country to escape religious oppression had installed their own system of religious oppression here.

In 1721, residents of Kent (South Wilton), Belden's Hill, and Pimpewaug had received permission to build their own animal pound and to designate their own highway surveyor, Joseph Birchard. Four years later there were over thirty families in the area, enough to support their own minister. The distance to attend Sunday meetings in Norwalk and dissatisfaction with the Norwalk minister, Reverend Stephen Buckingham, led to a movement to establish a separate parish, or village.

A request for permission to do this was sent to the Norwalk Town Meeting, and on December 7, 1725, Norwalk voted that "the inhabitants of Kent, Belden's Hill, and Chestnut Hill [may] become a parish by themselves if the General Court shall approve."<sup>22</sup> At the same meeting, it was voted that the distribution of school money would include the "upper parish." The inhabitants of Kent, Belden's Hill, and Chestnut Hill began to prepare a formal petition to submit to the General Court session in Hartford in the spring.

Norwalk voted in February 1726 to present the "upper society"<sup>23</sup> with the old Norwalk pulpit. At the same time the Norwalk Society terminated the salary of Rev. Buckingham, who was charged with improper conduct with another man's wife.<sup>23</sup> Wilton did not yet have a name, but apparently the pioneers eagerly began to hold their own services in anticipation of General Court approval. Norwalk and the "upper parish" each appointed committees to settle the boundaries, and on February 28, 1726 the dividing line between parish and town was approved.

In the petition drafted by the "upper parish" founders, the name "Wilton" first appeared. The reason for the choice of the name Wilton is still a mystery. Wiltshire (Wilton, England) was Roger Ludlow's birthplace but he was long-forgotten here, having returned to England seventy years before Wilton Parish was conceived. Of the petition signers, Deacon James Trowbridge's grandfather came from Taunton, England where an adjoining parish was named Wilton. No connection to the Lambert family or to any other early settlers has been verified.

\* Approval of the General Court (colonial legislature) was required for creation of a new parish.

<sup>21</sup> In New England Congregationalism, the church and the Ecclesiastical Society were separate and distinct bodies. The church managed spiritual matters and kept records of births, baptisms, membership, marriages, and deaths. The Society dealt with temporal affairs, including schools, ministers' salaries and church buildings. Members of the society were usually, but not always, church members as well. The Wilton Congregational (Ecclesiastical) Society was organized in 1726.

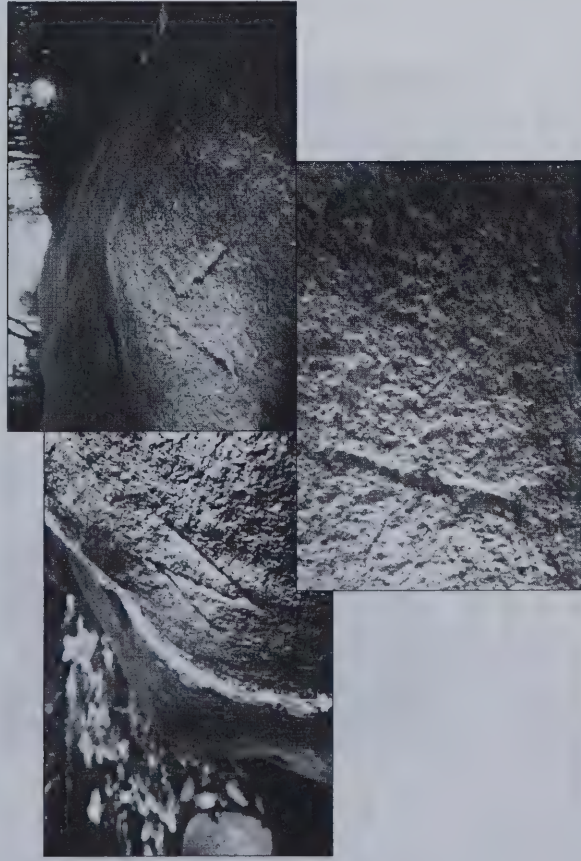












*Boundary Rock, on the east bank of the Norwalk River, carved in about 1767 with initials on three sides for Norwalk, Redding, and Fairfield. It now marks the point where Wilton, Redding, and Weston meet.*

The only early Wilton residents known to have lived in the 70 Rod were William Fountain, Michael Dunning, the son of John, and Samuel Higgins, a son-in-law of William Belden, but the name for the area persisted for many years.

Redding became a parish within Fairfield in 1729 and a separate town in 1767. At that time, probably before 1787 when Weston was incorporated, the point where the towns of Norwalk, Redding, and Fairfield came together was marked by a large rock, known as "Boundary Rock," on the east bank of the Norwalk River north of the railroad bridge along Old Mill Road and carved with the initial N on the west side, R on the northeast quadrant, and F on the southeast. A line running N 22° 30' W between the letters marks the Norwalk (Wilton) eastern boundary.\* For years, Boundary Rock was covered by a mill pond behind one of the dams in the river but since the 1955 flood it has again been exposed with the initials still visible.

\* Other accounts have speculated that the R is for Ridgefield and that Boundary Rock was carved in 1708 when Ridgefield was purchased from the Indians; however, the placement of the letters is not consistent with this theory. The Wilton boundary with Ridgefield is a mile

## *Minister and Meeting House*

At their first meeting on June 7, 1726, the new Society named Richard Bouton as parish clerk and selected Rev. Robert Sturgeon "to officiate in the work of the ministry." The choice of Rev. Sturgeon seems to have been made without a thorough background check. He had left his native Scotland after some difficulty there and had arrived in Watertown, Massachusetts in 1721, where the following year he became the minister. A year later he was indicted for "continuing wicked and malicious inclination to overthrow, ruin, and subvert the church."<sup>25</sup> Where he spent the next three years is not known, but he appeared in Wilton early in 1726.

The terms of the June 1726 Society agreement with Rev. Sturgeon included a salary retroactive to April 14, indicating his presence in this community from that date, a full supply of firewood, and five acres for a house lot. The annual salary was £90 or its equivalent in "good bills of credit of the Colony of Connecticut or other good bills of credit."<sup>26</sup>

Meeting the house lot commitment proved more difficult. A committee appointed in September 1726 searched without success for a convenient piece of land. On December 20 a compromise was reached whereby Rev. Sturgeon would accept five acres of undivided land (for a farm lot) in lieu of the five-acre house lot he had been promised. Another committee was sent to the next Norwalk proprietors' meeting to petition for these five acres, and the proprietors responded in February 1727 with not five but ten acres. They would contribute five more in 1729.

Meanwhile, in January 1727 Rev. Sturgeon bought a three-acre house lot for £12 from John Marvin Sr. and proceeded to build a house. His house, completed later in that year on the hill between the current Gaylord Drive North and South, was subsequently used by Reverend William Gaylord and his descendants. It stood until early in the twentieth century, when it was dismantled. The stone foundation is still evident. Some of the timbers were incorporated into a new home built at the corner of Westport Road and Downe Lane in 1931.

The site for the first Wilton meeting house was on common land on the south side of Wolfpit Road donated by the Norwalk proprietors, west of the river, and west of the present railroad tracks. The area was already known as Wolfpit Hill.\* The location was near the geographic center of the village's population but there was no bridge across the river and no public road to the church lot.

The structure of the parish building was simple. A "small square building with room for about one hundred and fifty persons," it initially had only

\* John Marvin Sr. was granted land "southeast of his land at Wolfpit Hill" in 1713 (Norwalk Town Proceedings March 2 1713/14)







*Gaylord house, built by Rev. Sturgeon in 1726, was occupied by Rev. William Gaylord and his descendants for 150 years. It stood on the hill between Gaylord Drive North and South until the early twentieth century.*

a dirt floor and bare, unplastered walls. Plain wooden benches served as pews, and Van Hoosear writes that the church was "four-roofed."<sup>27</sup>

The shell of the building was standing and possibly usable by July 20, 1726 at the time of Rev. Sturgeon's installation. The building still lacked certain necessary features to accommodate winter use: at the Society's September 3, 1726 meeting, members voted to "have the meeting house rectified by laying a floor, plastering the walls, and making comfortable seats." This was the first mention of the meeting house in the minutes.

### Seating the House

With the building complete, a committee chaired by Matthew St. John was appointed in November with the delicate task of "seating the house," assigning permanent seats in the meeting house according to rank and age. In December 1726, Stephen Betts was voted nine shillings for sweeping the house every three weeks during the coming year, not a small task in those days of dust, mud, and deep snow.

The seating plan was complete by January 1727 and included forty-two men, showing that the population had increased in the year since the petition was presented. In early Connecticut meeting houses, women and children were originally seated across the aisle from the men, but by 1740 the rules were relaxed so that families could sit together.<sup>28</sup>

Wilton's founders, as defined by the thirty-one signers of the May 1726 parish petition and the eleven additional members seated in January 1727, present an interesting and varied lot:

## 1726 Petition Signers

NAME	AGE	SEATING ASSIGNMENT
Daniel Abbott	55	Corner pew
Daniel Betts Jr.	28	Second long seat
Nathan Betts	27	Third long seat
Samuel Betts Jr.	32	First long seat
Stephen Betts	29	Other pew
Richard Bouton	47	First long seat
Thomas Bouton	49	Second long seat
Stephen Buckingham	24	Third long seat
Joseph Curle	unknown	Fourth long seat
John Dunning	42	First long seat
Jonathan Elmer	42	First long seat
Jachin Gregory	45	First long seat
Benjamin Hickox	41	Deacon's pew
Joseph Jump	22	Fourth long seat
David Keeler	33	Other pew
John Keeler	52	Great pew
Ralph Keeler III	53	Great pew
Nathaniel Ketchum	48	Great pew
Nathan Olmsted	24	Third long seat
William Parker	47	Corner pew
John St. John	42	First long seat
Matthew St. John	45	Great pew
Nathaniel Slauson	31	Second long seat
John Stewart (originally Steuart)	59	Great pew
Jonathan Sturdevant	30	Second long seat
John Taylor	52	Great pew
Daniel Trowbridge	26	Third long seat
James Trowbridge	63	Deacon's pew
Jonathan Wood Sr.	69	Corner pew
Jonathan Wood Jr.	35	Second long seat
Obadiah Wood	28	Third long seat
ADDITIONAL MEMBERS BY JANUARY 1727		
James Betts Jr.	27	Second long seat
Joseph Birchard	53	Great pew
John Bryant	27	Fourth long seat
William Drinkwater	unknown	Fourth long seat
Ebenezer Jackson	30	Third long seat
Ebenezer Keeler	38	First long seat
David Lambert	27	Second long seat
John Marvin Jr.	22	Third long seat
Amos Monroe	22	Fourth long seat
James Stewart Jr.	32	Second long seat
Samuel Wood	22	Fourth long seat





The meeting house seating plan of January 1727 provides an indication of wealth, seniority, and social status in early Wilton. The two elected church deacons had special seats at the foot of the pulpit. The great pew held seven families who were most prominent in the community. Those in the first long seat were younger and ranked just a bit lower in status. The heads of family in the second long seat were even younger and less experienced, and those in the third and fourth seats younger still, often unmarried, newer in the community, and without ties to the senior members. Two other smaller sets of seats, the corner pew and the other pew were available for men who did not fit the criteria for the other seats.

### *Characteristics of the Founders*

The average age of the men was 38.26 years.\* The senior members in the great pew averaged 51.7 years, those in the first long seat 41.1 years, the second long seat 34 years, and men in the last two rows 22.9. All but five were married. All but nine were related in one way or another to at least one of the other men. Not surprisingly, twenty-five of the forty-two came to Wilton from Norwalk. Twenty-one were from the Keeler, Betts, Trowbridge, Bouton, St. John, Stewart, or Wood families. Twelve out of the sixteen men in the three most important pews proved to be permanent settlers, living the rest of their lives in Wilton. Nineteen of the twenty-six less-advantaged men in the other seats did not remain long, moving to other, mostly newer, towns, chiefly for more land.

### *Settlers: Danbury Road and Chestnut Hill*

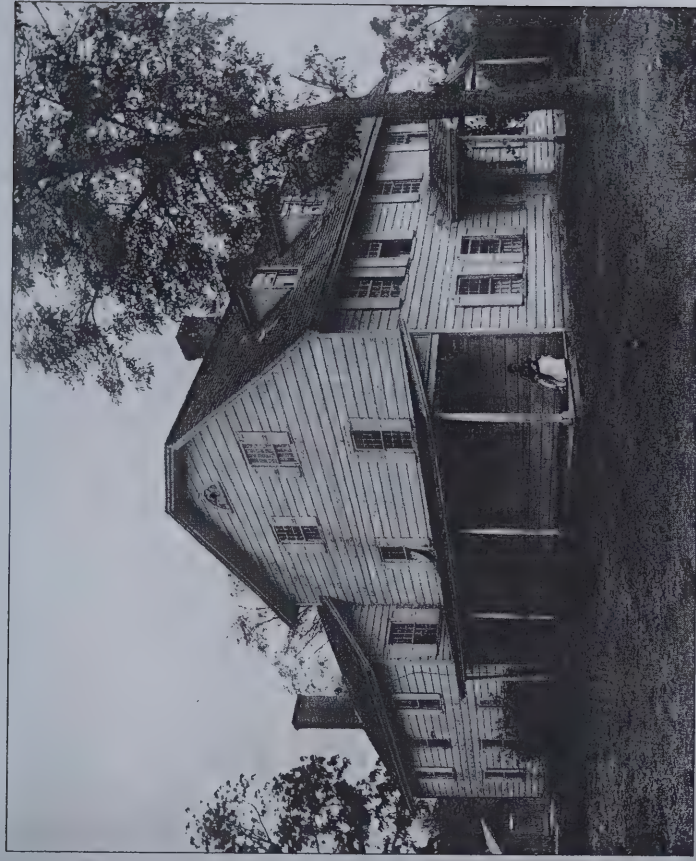
In addition to those described earlier, another two dozen families settled in Wilton before 1727. David Lambert came from Milford and was "admitted" as a Norwalk inhabitant in 1722, when only twenty-two years of age, although not as a proprietor. His father had left him an inheritance in 1718, with which David and his new wife, Lurany Bill of Lebanon, Connecticut in 1727 built the fine house at 150 Danbury Road.<sup>†</sup> Both of his brothers-in-law, Joseph Birchard and John Dunning, were from Lebanon and already lived in Wilton, which may explain how David got here.

At the September 1727 meeting, David Lambert, at age twenty-seven, emerged as a notable member. Not only did he deliver a report on the young society's finances, but it was agreed early on that his "house should be the single post<sup>‡</sup> for said society." Moreover, Lambert was assigned the

\*Excluding two men whose ages are unknown.

<sup>†</sup>The Lambert house is now the principal building at Lambert Corners, a complex of nine structures owned by the Wilton Historical Society and preserved under an adaptive use ordinance.

<sup>‡</sup>Where public notices were posted.



*David Lambert built the main section of his house at 150 Danbury Road in 1727.*

*Later, the roof was raised and building wings added. Acquired by the Wilton Historical Society in 1964.*

position of tavern keeper, and he and his brother-in-law Joseph Birchard were given liberty to erect an animal pound within twenty rods of his house, "provided they do it according to law and within two months, and if they neglect, the people of Pimpawauk shall have the same liberty . . . near unto Nathaniel Slauson's house."<sup>29</sup>

Lambert was elected Norwalk selectman in 1745 and representative to the colonial legislature in 1751. He lived a long life in Wilton and saw the colony break from England before his death. Although we have no record of how David felt at that time, his son David Jr. was known to be a British sympathizer. David Lambert died in 1784 and is buried in Sharp Hill Cemetery. The Lambert house on Danbury Road remained in the family until 1928.

The five members of the Betts family who were seated in January 1727 were all grandsons of Thomas Betts who came to Norwalk in 1660. Thomas had six sons and three daughters, who all grew to maturity and had large Norwalk families of their own. Two more grandsons settled in Wilton before 1733, along with two of their elderly fathers, Daniel Sr. and James Sr. By virtue of their long tenure in Norwalk, most of the Bettses were proprietors and owners of much Wilton land. The Wilton Historical Society in 1964.





is now the northwest corner of Danbury and Kent Roads about 1724. His wife was Sarah Comstock, daughter of Captain Samuel Comstock of Norwalk. His cousin, James Betts Jr., had a home across the street before 1727, north of John Dunning's residence.

Cousins of Daniel and James Jr., the three brothers Samuel II, Stephen, and Nathan Betts shared ownership of 400 acres in Pimpewaug and built their homes near the Danbury Road river crossing, now south of School Road. Their land extended westward up the hill known as Pimpewaug Neck (now Catalpa, Turner's Ridge, and Olmstead Hill) and eastward to Buckingham Ridge. Stephen was a surveyor and a collector of the minister's rate in Wilton. His house, occupied by the Harbs family in the early twentieth century, stood until 1947, when it was moved to a new location farther north on Danbury Road and later demolished. Samuel II was a lister (assessor) in Norwalk and captain of the militia and justice of the peace in Wilton. Nathan, the youngest, later married Mary Belden, daughter of William, sold his house to his brother Stephen, and moved over the hill to the west side of Pimpewaug Neck. There he built a house at 274 Ridgefield Road, where Middlebrook Farm Road terminates today.

John Taylor lived north of James Betts Jr. on the east side of Danbury Road in South Wilton. A Norwalk native and Norwalk proprietor, he grew up in Danbury where Thomas, his father, had moved as an early settler. A relative, Revolutionary Captain Timothy Taylor of Danbury, was the father of Clarina, wife of Rev. Samuel Merwin of Wilton in the 1830s.

John Marvin Jr., son of a well-to-do Norwalk proprietor and grandson of one of Norwalk's original settlers, lived at the southwest corner of Danbury Road and the path to the new meeting house, now Wolfpit Road. At age twenty-two, he and three others were the youngest seated members in 1727. Most of the land around his house was still owned by his father. In 1738, John Sr. gave the Wilton Society land for its second meeting house.

Brothers John and Matthew St. John were from an old Norwalk family. Matthew, a miller, built a sawmill in 1727 on the Falls Branch in partnership with grist mill owner Benjamin Hickox. Matthew had a farm of 130 acres on Pimpewaug Neck and lived there in a small house said to have been built in 1699 by (but never occupied by) Samuel Betts Sr., of Norwalk. Matthew served as chairman of the church seating committee and secured for himself a seat in the great pew. As there was still no public highway to the meeting house, Matthew St. John was sent to the General Court in Hartford in October 1727 to request action, whereupon the town of Norwalk was ordered to build Wolfpit Road. Matthew was elected ensign of the Wilton Train Band (training band or militia) at its organization in 1727. He succeeded Richard Bouton as clerk of the Society in 1731. He and his four sons (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) and their families migrated to the new town of Sharon, Connecticut in 1745.

Stamford, built a house about 1726 on the east side of the river at Pimpewaug Ford. (Another house replaced it on the site at 51 Pimpewaug Road about a hundred years later.) Slauson's wife was Margaret Belden, one of the nine daughters of William Belden. The Slausons moved to the new town of Kent in 1740.

Another founder, Amos Monroe, a twenty-two-year-old bachelor, was the first to live on what is now Grumman Hill Road (laid out in 1727). Joseph Jump (as he signed his name), the son of a Norwalk soldier in King Philip's War in 1675, owned land north of the present Cannondale station from 1717 to 1726 but then sold it and disappeared from Wilton. He left his name, Jump Hill, on the land. The Methodists built on Jump Hill in 1844 but wisely chose the name of Zion's Hill for their church.

Deacon James Trowbridge, a cordwainer from New Haven and the second oldest founding member, was not a Norwalk proprietor but his wife Mary was a niece of the wealthy Belden brothers of Norwalk. Her Uncle Samuel Belden gave the couple 80 acres on Chestnut Hill at the northwest corner of the present Dudley Road. Trowbridge served Norwalk as fence viewer, collector, and grand juror. His eldest son, Daniel, also a founding member, soon moved with his wife to Drum Hill. Deacon Trowbridge died in 1732.

### *Belden's Hill and Ridgefield Road*

John St. John set the tune to the psalms on Sunday and was Society Treasurer. He farmed 145 acres on the west side of (Old) Belden Hill from 1715 until his death in 1773. Kent Road was laid out in 1729 to provide more convenient access to the main road for St. John and his neighbors.

Nathaniel Ketchum, another Norwalk native, was St. John's neighbor to the east, with a farm of 87 acres. He was on the Society Committee, the Highway Committee, in charge of Wilton school money, the first lieutenant of the Wilton Train Band in 1727, and a Norwalk selectman in 1728.

The first Society Clerk, Richard Bouton, a Norwalk native and descendant of a Norwalk founder but not a proprietor, had a farm of 100 acres on "Sear Hill," inherited from his father. His older brother Thomas, who seems to have been illiterate, had a smaller piece of land, also on Sear Hill. Both left Wilton in the early 1730s. Richard, and probably Thomas as well, followed Rev. Sturgeon to Bedford, New York in 1731. Jonathan Sturdevant, a Norwalk native with 30 acres at the upper end of Belden Hill, held no offices in either Norwalk or the Wilton Society and also left in 1731 with Rev. Sturgeon, showing that church schisms existed even then.

James Stewart Jr., nephew of John Stewart of Chestnut Hill, built a house across from Sturdevant, at the base of Drum Hill, on a farm of 165 acres inherited from his father and grandfather, Robert Stewart, a Norwalk





and later settled north of James on Drum Hill, where his illustrious grandson Moses Stuart was born in 1760.\*

Petition signer Jachin (or Jachen, as he signed his name) Gregory had a farm and house dating from 1718 on the east side of Belden Hill Road. By 1733, his brothers Matthew and Samuel joined him in Wilton. Their grandfather John Gregory was a 1655 settler of Norwalk and hence the grandsons were Norwalk proprietors and significant landowners. Their cousin Ebenezer Gregory, the leading landowner in Norwalk, owned an expansive tract farther north on the east side of Belden Hill on which his sons Ebenezer II and Nathan later settled. Jachin's house has not survived, but Matthew's house at 169 Belden Hill, built in 1740, is still occupied by the Gregory family. Nathan's, at 160 Belden Hill, and Ebenezer II's, at 180 Belden Hill, both were built about 1754.

In addition to Samuel and John Keeler, mentioned earlier, there were three more Keelers among the original members: John's brother David and their cousins Ralph III and Ebenezer. Their grandfather Ralph I had been an original purchaser of Norwalk with Richard Olmsted. All of the Keelers were Norwalk proprietors and consequently owned considerable Wilton land. John Keeler was by 1727 considered the wealthiest farmer in Wilton but he was also somewhat cantankerous.<sup>30</sup> When he found that the tax rate in Wilton† was higher than Norwalk, he built himself a small house on the Norwalk end of his 134-acre property and moved there, then objected to the payment of tax on his Wilton land. In 1729 Keeler sued the Wilton collector of the minister's rate to recover his payment of £6 6s. 6d. He lost the case, thereby establishing the right of a parish to tax absentee land owners.<sup>31</sup>

John's younger brother David, a more agreeable man, had a small farm and a tradesman shop on Belden Hill next to John's property, although it is not known whether he was a blacksmith, cordwainer, or weaver. He later became a deacon in the church.

Their cousin Ralph Keeler III lived on the west side of Belden Hill. He was given 200 acres in Wilton by his father, Ralph II, in 1717, and had a seat in the great pew. He left Wilton in 1743, moving to New Fairfield where he spent the last twenty-two years of his life, living to the age of eighty. His brother Ebenezer purchased 56 acres on Drum Hill and was assigned to the third long seat. He served as a Wilton official from 1730 to 1733.

Another beneficiary of the Keeler largesse was young Nathan Olmsted, another founding member, who was orphaned when both his father and mother, Nathan Sr. and Sarah Keeler, daughter of Ralph Keeler II, died young. Grandfather Ralph Keeler II gave land on Drum Hill to young

\* Moses Stuart became a professor of languages at Andover Seminary and was known as the founder of Biblical scholarship in America.

† The Wilton rate for support of the minister was eight pence upon the pound, equivalent to one mill.

Nathan, who however did not remain long in Wilton. Nathan's half-brother James Olmsted in 1729 assembled a farm of 87 acres on the hill to which he gave his name. Both James and his brother Samuel, who also came to Wilton, were Norwalk proprietors.

Jonathan Elmer, a native of Windsor, Connecticut, came to Norwalk in 1716 and to Wilton in 1721. He bought a farm of 80 acres from one of the Bettess on Ridgefield Road, north of the Drum Hill intersection, on the west slope of what was then known as Pimpewaug Neck (later Olmsted Hill). He was the psalm reader in the Wilton church and a constable in Norwalk. In 1732 he was elected church deacon, succeeding the late James Trowbridge. He and his grown sons and their families moved to Sharon, Connecticut in 1746, where his son Samuel Elmer/Elmore later served with distinction as an officer in the Revolutionary War.

The home of William Parker and his wife Mary, the widow of Joseph Rockwell, was the next house to the north. Rockwell and others were granted land on Drum Hill in 1689 for calling Norwalk residents to meetings with their drums. He exchanged that land for the site on Ridgefield Road and probably moved his family there before he died in 1714. Parker was a "man of no estate" and moved into the Rockwell family home when he married Mary in 1717. He was a signer of the 1726 petition but did not remain long in Wilton, leaving in 1740. Mary's sons, Joseph Rockwell Jr. and Jonah Rockwell, remained in Wilton and became members of the church.

## Moses Comstock

A forty-third member of the Wilton church never lived in Wilton. Moses Comstock owned Comstock Hill on the west side of the Silvermine River in what would in 1731 become Canaan Parish. Moses found it preferable to attend Sunday meeting in Wilton rather than Norwalk so in April 1727 he applied and was granted "the privilege of the meeting house at all times of public worship." He also agreed to give the society an annual contribution towards the minister's salary. His daughters Abigail and Hannah and his son Moses II all joined the Wilton church, as well as his black slave, Cesar, who was the first black member. Mr. Comstock had educated Cesar along with his own children. Moses remained a Wilton member until his death in 1766.

## Heritage of Wilton Settlers

All of the first members of the Wilton church were born in this country. Twenty-one had fathers born in Norwalk and the fathers of most of the others were New Englanders. Among the grandfathers of the church leaders, seven were born in England between 1594 and 1617 and arrived in America between 1602 and 1611.





## HOMES OF THE EARLY SETTLERS



Approximate home locations of early residents can be determined from church and land records. Few of the early houses have survived. Many have been rebuilt on the same site.

- |                         |                       |                        |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Samuel Keeler        | 18. Nathaniel Ketchum | 34. Stephen Buckingham |
| 2. Jeremiahs Mead       | 19. John St. John     | 35. Matthew St. John   |
| 3. Benjamin Hickox      | 20. Daniel Betts II   | 36. Nathan Betts       |
| 4. William Parker       | 21. James Betts Jr.   | 37. Stephen Betts      |
| 5. Jonathan Elmer       | 22. John Dunning      | 38. Samuel Betts II    |
| 6. Nathan Olmsted       | 23. John Taylor       | 39. Nathaniel Slawson  |
| 7. Ebenezer Keeler      | 24. Joseph Birchard   | 40. Jacob Patchen      |
| 8. William Drinkwater   | 25. John Stewart      | 41. Joseph Jump        |
| 9. James Stewart Jr.    | 26. Daniel Abbott     | 42. Obadiah Wood       |
| 10. Jonathan Sturdevant | 27. Amos Monroe       | 43. Samuel Wood        |
| 11. Jachin Gregory      | 28. George Abbott     | 44. Jonathan Wood Jr.  |
| 12. Meeting House       | 29. James Trowbridge  | 45. William Belden     |
| 13. Ralph Keeler III    | 30. Ebenezer Jackson  | 46. Jonathan Wood      |
| 14. John Keeler         | 31. David Lambert     | 47. Elias Betts        |
| 15. David Keeler        | 32. Parsonage         | 48. James Olmsted      |
| 16. Richard Bouton      | 33. John Marvin Jr.   | 49. Matthew Gregory    |
| 17. Thomas Bouton       |                       |                        |

Thomas Birchard, Joseph's grandfather, arrived in the ship *True Love* as a forty-year-old laborer in 1635, and by 1639 he was a proprietor of Hartford. Benjamin Hickox's grandfather was a Farmington purchaser in 1643; Ralph Keeler I arrived in Hartford in 1635 and by 1650 became a Norwalk purchaser. Deacon James Trowbridge's grandfather arrived in Dorchester, Massachusetts in 1636. Edward Ketchum came to Ipswich in 1637. John Taylor I, grandfather of Wilton's John Taylor, was in New Haven in 1639, where his story sadly and mysteriously ended seven years later on the fateful *Phantom Ship*,\* coincidentally, along with the grandfather of Deacon Trowbridge.<sup>32</sup>

The vast majority of emigrés who founded and settled Connecticut towns, including Norwalk, hailed from either East Anglia or the counties west of London. Sixty percent came from East Anglia, the nine counties surrounding the districts of Suffolk, Essex, and Norfolk also known as "the early nursery of dissent."<sup>33</sup> Connecticut's founder, Reverend Thomas

\* *The Phantom*, or *Great Shippe*, a large, ocean-going vessel, was built in New Haven between 1644 and 1646 as a last effort by New Haven leaders to remain as an independent small colony. The ship sailed for England in 1646 with a cargo of peas, wheat, hides and furs valued at £5,000, seventy passengers, and crew but was never seen or heard from again, though





Hooker, was an Essex man. One-third of the passengers in the Great Migration emigrated from the west country, the region to the west of London where the counties of Dorset, Somerset, and Wiltshire merged.

The Great Migration between 1630 and 1641 brought over 20,000 Englishmen to New England shores. Many settlers, including ancestors of the first Wiltonians, sailed on vessels of the Winthrop Fleet. Led by the 350-ton *Arabella*, the ship that brought John Winthrop to the New World, sixteen other vessels sailed to New England in 1630 alone. By 1680, forty-six years before Wilton Parish was organized, 500,000 English had emigrated to the American colonies. Among the Great Migration-era travelers, and unlike the Chesapeake regions fed by indentured servants, a high percentage came as families.

To become a colonist was no easy process. Sailing across the Atlantic in the seventeenth century was usually a terrifying venture and often fatal. Ships were small and navigation was rudimentary, without accurate maps. And there was always the risk of piracy. Each ship carried between 100 and 150 passengers per voyage that under the best of circumstances could be completed in five weeks, though it often took as many as twelve.

It cost immigrants transporting a family of six across the Atlantic £50 for the poorest accommodations and £60 to £80 for minimal comforts on the journey. This was an age in England when the average yeoman earned between £40 and £60 per year. Because of the high cost of migrating, people in Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut's mother colony, were likely to be twice as literate as their contemporaries in England. Fifty to sixty percent had been engaged in a skilled trade before departing from their homeland and less than one-third had been farmers.

A desire for economic betterment and land ownership was as important as religious reasons for the emigration of these men. "Above all they dreamed of land."<sup>34</sup> They wanted independence from the economic, social, and religious environment of Stuart England. Many peasants had been forced from their lands as a result of the enclosure of open fields for the wool industry, and moved to the cities as wage laborers, creating a class of frustrated, talented, and skilled Englishmen ready to tame the virgin New England forests.<sup>35</sup>

### *Norwalk's Viewpoint*

Although Norwalk records do not reveal any dissatisfaction with the creation of a parish in Wilton, historians have argued that such a decision created angst among town fathers in most Connecticut communities. They balked at the thought of a separate parish within their town because it "deepened the separation from the community of a group already suspected of disloyalty" as "... an aura of dissent remained among the outlivers."<sup>36</sup>

New parishes or towns incorporated in the early eighteenth century usually included between twenty and forty families.<sup>37</sup> The major consideration among legislators at the General Court when considering petitions for new ecclesiastical offspring was their ability to afford the expenses surrounding a minister and meeting house.

Norwalk's founders initially granted proprietary status to new arrivals as it was hungry for new settlers, but when proprietors parceled out their land, they also were parceling out their muscle. In 1726, on the eve of Wilton Parish's creation and seventy-five years after the founding of Norwalk, about two-thirds of the Wilton lands had been parceled out. By then, the overall importance of proprietors was clearly declining. The time for a parish in the north land had arrived.<sup>38</sup>





## TWO



## Growth and Development

New Minister • Wilton in 1733 • Roads and Localities •  
 A Tour Through Wilton in 1733: Belden's Hill and  
 Ridgefield Road • Chestnut Hill and Buckingham Ridge •  
 Danbury Road • Schools • Division of the Lands •  
 New Meeting House • Great Awakening • Migrations  
 Out of Wilton • Living on the Land • Early Mills •  
 Georgetown • Inns and Taverns • Slaves, Blacks, Spruce  
 Bank Cemetery • Wilton Cemeteries • Wilton in 1770

### New Minister

After only three years, dissatisfaction with Rev. Sturgeon appeared in the Society minutes of September 1729. A committee met with him to find out why he had not yet brought his wife and children to Wilton and encouraged him to do so. When his family eventually arrived, his sermon topic was "we have seen strange things today."<sup>1</sup> Also, Rev. Sturgeon's Presbyterian background was sufficiently different from the Wilton Congregationalists to cause unrest. The final break came two years later when the members of the Society voted unanimously that they were "uneasy under his pastoral care." Rev. Sturgeon resigned and went to a Presbyterian church in Bedford, New York. Three Wilton families went with him: the Bouton brothers\* and Jonathan Sturdevant.

The Society was much more careful in its selection of a replacement. Rev. William Gaylord, a recent Yale graduate and fifth-generation American<sup>†</sup> with a solid Congregational background, was invited to preach in May 1732. After a four-month trial period, he was called to settle here in August. It proved to be a wise choice, as he was well liked and remained in Wilton until his death in January 1767. He is still with us in Sharp Hill Cemetery.

In January 1733 Rev. Gaylord married Elizabeth Davenport, a fourth-generation American with an even more impressive Congregational pedigree than her husband. She was the daughter of Rev. John Davenport, minister at Stamford for thirty-six years, and the great-granddaughter of another Rev. John Davenport, the founder of New Haven in 1638. Before her death at thirty-eight in 1747, she bore him seven children, including Moses, who died in the French and Indian War. Rev. Gaylord remarried in 1752, to Elizabeth Bishop, and had six more children, including Deodate, a Revolutionary War soldier. Deodate's grandson, Rev. John Gaylord Davenport (1840-1921), a Wilton native and Congregational minister in Bridgeport and Waterbury, was an active participant in Wilton historical celebrations in 1876 and 1901. Both Elizabeth Gaylords are also buried in Sharp Hill Cemetery, neither one near her husband.

Rev. William Gaylord was a meticulous record keeper. He recorded the names of all Wilton Congregational Church members and their children at the time of his installation in February 1733, and he recorded names of 350 new members, 924 baptisms, 183 marriages, and 200 deaths during his tenure of more than thirty-four years, an invaluable reference for us today.

After Rev. Gaylord's death in January 1767, the Church called Rev. Samuel Mills; however, the vote was not unanimous, and apparently for that reason Rev. Mills declined. He went instead to a church at Torrington in

\* Hence today there is a Boutonville Road in Pound Ridge, New York.  
 † Mr. ...





Litchfield County, where he remained for sixty-four years. Wilton then invited Rev. Isaac Lewis, Yale 1765, who accepted in 1768 and remained until June 1786. His home while in Wilton was the former home of Captain Elihu DeForest, located on Danbury Road roughly where Our Lady of Fatima Church is today. (The house was pulled down prior to 1876.)<sup>2</sup> During the Revolution, Rev. Lewis served as chaplain of a Connecticut regiment in the Continental Army in 1776. He was asked to be chaplain for the entire Continental Army, but, as the Wilton people were unwilling to give him leave of absence, he declined.

### *Wilton in 1733*

In the mid-eighteenth century, Wilton's population grew at a rapid rate. By the end of 1733, the church had sixty-eight families plus several single individuals, more than double the number in 1726, only seven years earlier. This number would triple by 1770. Many sons and brothers of the original families were included in the 1733 family count, including Samuel and Ebenezer Abbott, Samuel Gregory, Elihu Ketchum, Matthew and Josiah Marvin, Joseph Monroe, James Olmsted, Robert and Samuel Stewart, Ezra St. John, Caleb Trowbridge, and Titus Wood.

New family names included Joseph Allen, William and John Belden, Daniel and Samuel Cole, Nathan Comstock, David DeForest, William Fountain, Nathan Green, Thomas Hurlbutt (or Holybert), Jeremiah and Theophilus Mead, Stephen Morehouse, Solomon Noble, Jacob Patchen, Joseph Peck, Asahel Raymond, Charles Sloan, John Westcott, David Whelpley, and William Williams. Descendants of many of these families live in Wilton today.

The count of sixty-eight families in 1733 approximated the total number of families in the parish, as very few residents were not members of the established church. Lieutenant Samuel Keeler at Hop Meadow in North Wilton was an exception. Almost one-third of Wilton was undivided and unsurveyed land, owned in common by the Norwalk proprietors, and much of the rest of the land was owned individually by residents of Norwalk. Over the next forty years, almost all of the undivided and absentee-owned land was sold as farmland to Wilton settlers. In this period, over 450 new members joined the Wilton Congregational Church. Members of other denominations began to appear as the colonial legislature gradually enacted religious toleration laws.

### *Roads and Localities*

Early homes in Wilton were built on or near the oldest roads—the road to Danbury, by way of Old Mill Road and Umpawaug Road, dated from before 1660 and the road to Beldenfield between Old Belden's Hill and Drum Hill

dated from 1713.<sup>3</sup> Both towns had been settled by Norwalk men, in 1685 and 1709 respectively, and the roads provided a connection for trade and travel between the old and new communities. The "new" Ridgefield Road, built in 1734, extended from the Ridgefield Road/Drum Hill intersection south to near Hickox's mill, eastward from there through the river plain, now Wilton Center, then across the river at the north end of today's Schenck's Island, and connected with Danbury Road at the present Old Highway corner.

In early Wilton deeds,\* reference to the "country road" refers to a road between two towns. Local roads referred to as "highways" were hardly more than broad swaths cut through woods or hemmed in on both sides by the ubiquitous stone walls.<sup>†</sup> Even more rustic were "pent" roads, which were private roads closed by barways and only available to those who would replace the bar when passing through. Finally, there were "driftways" which provided access to fields or pastures.<sup>‡</sup>

It is amazing to realize that most of the major Wilton roads still in use today were laid out before 1740, including Belden Hill, 1705; Chestnut Hill, 1724; Chicken Street, 1726; Cheese Spring, 1726; Cedar Road, 1728; DeForest Road, 1726; Drum Hill, 1707; Dudley Road, 1720; Grumman Hill, 1727; Hulda Hill, 1726; Hurlbutt Street, 1726; Huckleberry Hill, 1738; Honey Hill, 1742; Kent Road, 1729; Lovers Lane (originally Mill Road), 1725; Olmstead Hill, 1729; Range Road, 1727; Seeley Road, 1726; Seir Hill, 1718; Sharp Hill, 1737; Sturges Ridge (originally Harries Ridge), 1726; and Wolf-pit Road, 1727.<sup>6</sup> Most of these roads were not named when they were laid out but over time acquired names from physical features or local residents.

Chicken Street, which originally included all of Mountain Road, was a path used by Chief Chicken. Drum Hill was the site of land granted by Norwalk in 1689 to Jonathan and Joseph Rockwell and William Lees for keeping their drums in good repair to summon residents to assemble.<sup>7</sup> Despite the inscription on the elegant D.A.R. sign placed in 1963, the drummers lived in Norwalk and did their award-winning drumming there; there were no settlers in Pimpewaug to be summoned. Furthermore, none of the drummers ever lived on this land, but Joseph Rockwell later exchanged his land for a plot farther north at 358 Ridgefield Road.

Often, Wilton localities were given names by absentee landowners long before the roads and settlers came. Pimpewaug first appears in a 1660 Norwalk deed and in subsequent deeds is spelled nineteen different ways.<sup>‡</sup>

\* Deeds prior to 1802 are on file in the Norwalk Town Clerk's office.

† Initially, many farm fences were made of wood—branches, logs, and brush—but by the time of the Revolution, when most of the wood had been used up, stone was the fence material of choice. Most of New England's stone walls were built between the end of the Revolution and the coming of the railroad (1776–1850).

‡ Most proper names were then spelled phonetically, even by family members. Hence





Other early names were Bald Hill, 1705; Buckingham Ridge, 1711; Comstock Ridge, 1726; Honey Hill, 1711; Hop Meadow, 1710; Kent, 1699; Long Hollow, 1738; Millstone Hill, 1739; Nod, 1757; Parting Brook, 1726; Rockhouse Woods, 1721; Rusco's Ridge, 1716; Spectacle Bog, 1711; and Split Rock, 1714.<sup>8</sup>

### *A Tour Through Wilton in 1733: Belden's Hill and Ridgefield Road*

Many of the original house lots in Wilton still have houses on them, parts of which may be original or date from the eighteenth century; however, over the intervening years, most have been modified or restored and rebuilt. Church records identify the residents and land records tell us where they lived.

Between 1727 and 1733, a number of homes had already changed owners, some more than once, and several more had been built. Starting at the southwest part of town, when Richard Bouton went to Bedford in 1731 he sold his farm on Seir Hill to Titus Wood, fourth son of Jonathan Sr. On lower Belden's Hill, Samuel Gregory, 28, son of Thomas and Elizabeth Ketchum Gregory and a nephew of Jachin and Matthew, had married Sarah Keeler and built a house on land obtained from her father, Ralph III. Caleb Trowbridge, 27, younger son of the late Deacon James, married Jemima Keeler, another daughter of Ralph III, and built on land adjacent to his brother-in-law Samuel Gregory. Both young men soon left Wilton and moved to New Fairfield, Caleb in 1743 and Gregory in 1746.

Jonathan Sturdevant left Wilton for Bedford with Rev. Sturgeon. In turn, John Westcott of Bedford bought Sturdevant's farm on Belden Hill Road near the corner of Belden Hill and Drum Hill. Westcott's three sons and their sons served in several wars over the next fifty years.

At the north end of Belden's Hill, Ezra St. John built a new home near the Hickox mill on the Falls Branch of the Norwalk River at or near 19 Lovers Lane.\* On Drum Hill, a new home was built by Robert Stewart next to his brother James Jr. on 90 acres given to him by their Norwalk father, James Sr. This house, at 165 Drum Hill, was later the birthplace of Robert's famous grandson, Moses Stuart, an eminent Biblical scholar in the first half of the nineteenth century. Daniel Trowbridge, a signer of the Wilton petition and older brother of Caleb, bought the former house of Nathan Olmsted. The rest of Drum Hill was still owned by Ebenezer Keeler.

A new road was laid out west from Drum Hill to a house built on Comstock Ridge by Moses Comstock's brother, Captain Samuel Comstock of Norwalk, where Samuel's twenty-year-old son Nathan lived and managed the farm. Nathan married Bethiah Strong in 1739 and joined the Wilton

church a year later, becoming the patriarch of the extensive Comstock family in Wilton. Their most famous son, Major Samuel, named for his grandfather, was a distinguished Revolutionary officer. Their other sons, Aaron and Benejah Strong, also served in the war and established families in Wilton. Beyond Comstock's, the new road extended along Cheese Spring Ridge to a new home near the Canaan line built by the large land owner John Keeler.

Two new houses appeared in 1733 at the intersection of Drum Hill with Ridgefield Road. The first, on the east side, was for Solomon Noble, a cordwainer (leather worker or shoemaker), husband of Hepzibah Betts and brother-in-law of Samuel II, Stephen, and Nathan Betts. He bought the site from his neighbor Nathan Betts and opened a tavern there in 1749. In 1755 Michael Middlebrook bought Noble's tavern and Nathan Betts's house at 274 Ridgefield Road. The Middlebrook house was rebuilt on or near the same site for Jonathan Middlebrook II in 1849 by Wilton carpenter Lockwood K. Ferris, who recorded the date in his diary and left a note between the walls of the house.

The second new house, on the west side of the road, was that of Theophilus Mead, from an old Greenwich family. Unmarried in 1733, three years later he married Abigail Westcott, daughter of John. Their daughter Mercy Mead married Major Samuel Comstock. Jeremiah Mead, brother of Theophilus, built a home on 28 acres farther north on Ridgefield Road, at the corner of a road to Canaan Parish (2 DeForest Road).

Jeremiah Mead married Hannah St. John, niece of Captain Samuel Comstock of Norwalk (1680-1752), grandfather of Wilton's Major Samuel Comstock, and owner of the entire ridge to the west (now Signal Hill), which may explain how the Mead brothers chose this land. Jeremiah maintained a tavern for travelers at his home, still known as the Mead Tavern 250 years later, although extensively rebuilt. His most famous son, Colonel Matthew Mead, born in 1735, was Wilton's highest ranking Revolutionary officer (and second cousin of Major Samuel Comstock; their grandparents were brother and sister).

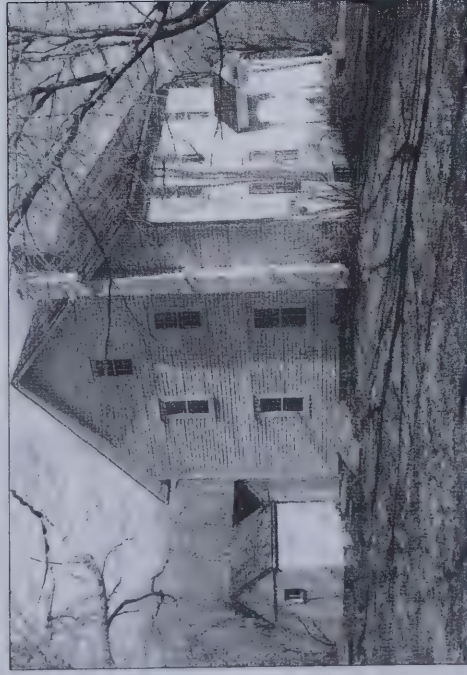
On the east side of Ridgefield Road moving north from Drum Hill, were the earlier homes of both deacons, Jonathan Elmer and Benjamin Hickox, with William Parker's house in between. Parker left Wilton in 1740.

Jeremiah Mead's neighbors to the south were David Whepley, 28, and his wife Elizabeth. David later became one of the first Anglicans (Episcopalians) in Wilton. Their daughter Phebe married her neighbor, Colonel Matthew Mead.

Nathan Green, grandson of the John Green who gave his name to Green's Farms in Westport, had a small house on Ridgefield Road almost opposite a new road laid out in 1727 to the east over Pimpewaug Neck (Olmstead Hill). Green's hobby seems to have been building and selling







*James Olmsted's house, first built in 1729 at 236 Olmstead Hill Road, rebuilt on site. Still occupied by a member of the family.*

before 1745. He then moved to Ridgefield. Jonah Rockwell, 23, son of Mary Rockwell Parker, owned five acres of land at "Ketchum's Bogg" (now Pope's Pond) on the west slope of Pimpewaug Neck.

At the very top of the hill on this new road, James Olmsted, 25, half-brother of Nathan, built a home about 1729 on 87 acres. His original house no longer stands, but a replacement, still occupied by the Olmsted/Olmstead family and on James Olmsted's lands, was built on the same site at 236 Olmstead Hill, now 1 Collinswood Road. James served on the Society Committee and in 1767 was elected deacon. Most of the Wilton Olmsteads have descended from James.

### *Chestnut Hill and Buckingham Ridge*

The first Raymond in Wilton was Asahel, son of John Raymond II of Norwalk. Asahel bought a small farm at the southeastern corner of Wilton in 1732, then after his father died, moved to a larger home on Chestnut Hill. His sons Asahel II and Clapp became leaders in Wilton. Samuel Stewart and his cousin John Jr. joined John Stewart Sr., the Norwalk surveyor, on the ample Chestnut Hill tract formerly owned by their grandfather Robert.

Farther north, John Belden II, another surveyor,\* bought the old James Trowbridge place with 50 acres of land. His son John Belden III built the first mill in Georgetown in 1760 on the Norwalk River in the steep Long

\* Son of John Belden, the Norwalk merchant, and cousin of William Belden.

Hollow gorge (Old Mill Road). Another son, Samuel Belden, was a storekeeper in Wilton during the time of the Revolution and Wilton's first Town Clerk in 1802.

Joseph Monroe, uncle of Amos Monroe, purchased nine acres on the west slope of Chestnut Hill (Dudley Road). Samuel and Ebenezer Abbott, sons of the late George Abbott II, joined their uncle Daniel Abbott, in Wilton since 1710, as farmers on the west slope. Samuel soon left Wilton but Ebenezer, whose home was at 51 Shadow Lane, has descendants in Wilton today.

On Buckingham Ridge, Stephen Buckingham in 1731 sold 83 of the 200 acres given to him by his uncle, Rev. Buckingham, to Thomas Hurlbutt IV of Fairfield who gave his family name to the street. Thomas was about fifty years old, with three sons, and his wife Phebe Gregory was a cousin of Jachin and Matthew. Another 50 acres of Buckingham's farm was sold in 1733 to Stephen Morehouse, 21, from Fairfield. When Morehouse died four years later, his widow married Ebenezer Hurlbutt, son of Thomas next door, thereby reuniting the two farms.

Jacob Patchen, 70, bought 20 acres at 226 Cannon Road at the upper end of Buckingham Ridge in 1727 and built soon afterwards. His family included his sons Joseph, 37, with a wife and four children, and Jacob II, 32, a carpenter, and his wife, Jacob II, later employed to finish the new second meeting house, became a member of the Society Committee and School Committee, and held the post of surveyor of highways for Norwalk.



*Jacob Patchen built a small 10 by 25 foot house at 226 Cannon Road and joined the Wilton Church in 1729. House enlarged several times, starting in 1795.*





## Danbury Road

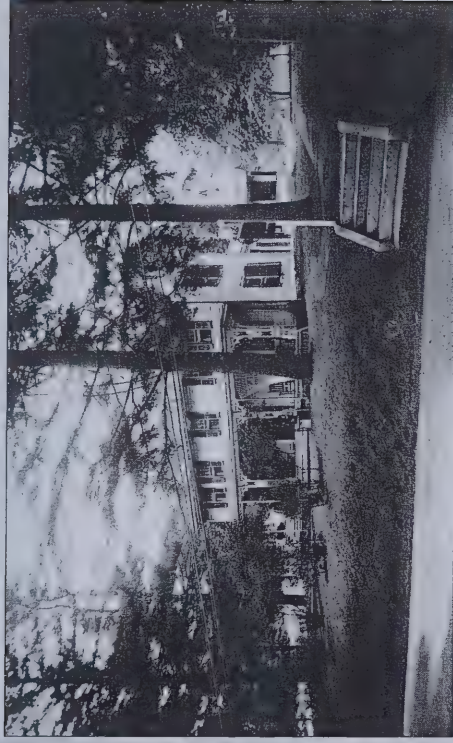
William Belden, 56, brought his large family from Deerfield, Massachusetts to Wilton in 1727 and shortly thereafter bought a house in the Egypt district from Obadiah Wood and expanded it into the stately home currently at 539 Danbury Road. His merchant uncles in Norwalk had both died: John in 1713 and Samuel in 1728. Belden's two sons and eight of his nine daughters married and lived in Wilton, making them one of the largest family groups in town. Two sons-in-law, Nathaniel Slauson and Nathan Betts, were signers of the Wilton petition. Four others lived nearby: Daniel Cole, Alexander Resseguie Jr., John Rockwell, and Samuel Higgins. Two more daughters later married Daniel Hurlbutt and Zebulon Crane.

In addition to the five Betts families in Wilton seated in January 1727, four more of the prolific Betts clan arrived in the next six years. Daniel Betts Sr. built near his son at the (Kent Road) corner, James Sr. and Benjamin located on the west side of Danbury Road near David Lambert's house, and John Betts joined the Wood families and William Belden in the Egypt area, at 530 Danbury Road. Perhaps the most notable Betts house was built in 1740 at 224 Danbury Road by Elias Betts (1716-1782), son of James Sr. and younger brother of James Jr. and Benjamin. Elias's house has been restored and is now the home of the Wilton Historical Society.

Blacksmith Joseph Peck was invited to settle in Wilton in 1729 to provide a necessary service to the community. He bought land from David Lambert at "Prink's Plain" (across from the present Town Hall) and established his home and shop at 249 Danbury Road. He did not remain long, selling and moving in 1733. His property passed to weaver Alexander Sloan and in 1757 to Clapp Raymond, Asahel's second son. Fifteen years later in 1772, Raymond built a handsome new house now owned by the Wilton Historical Society. It survived for 229 years on the original site, serving as a tavern during the Revolution, then as a home for the Comstock, Sturges, and Fitch families. Due to pending road construction, the Raymond/Fitch house was moved in January 2001 to join the Elias Betts house farther south on Danbury Road.

In Pimpewaug, Charles Sloan built a home near the ford and across the road from Nathaniel Slauson, at 354 Danbury Road.\*

North of the 400-acre Betts farms, a new house was built by Matthew Marvin IV, 31, and his brother Josiah, 29, on 130 acres owned by their father Samuel of Norwalk. Matthew IV died at 42 but Josiah became an officer in the Troop of Horse during the French and Indian War and a vestryman of St. Paul's in Norwalk. Matthew's son Matthew V established



*Elias Betts built at 224 Danbury Road about 1740 on land of his father, James Sr. The original house probably had four rooms. Kitchen lean-to added with a massive fireplace and two beehive ovens. The house was "Victorianized" and used in the 1920s as a tea room. Now restored, it is the headquarters of the Wilton Historical Society.*

a tavern at 405 Danbury Road in 1762 that was well known during the Revolutionary War. His son, Matthew VI, a Yale graduate, was an early official of the Town of Wilton after 1802.

## Schools

Universal education has always been the pride of New England and was written into the Connecticut Law Code of 1650. This was required by the Puritan Congregationalists so that all children could learn to support themselves at a calling and would be able to read scripture to fortify themselves against the ever-present threat of Satan. Many of the colonies farther south did not have a similar concern. A Connecticut colony law passed in 1717 required every parish to have a school. The Wilton Society meeting of December 9, 1728 voted to set up a school and three months later voted to employ Rev. Sturgeon as teacher. A very small (£6 per year) fund of education money was available from the colonial government, and the rest of Rev. Sturgeon's compensation was paid as tuition by the parents of the scholars. Four years later, the burden was eased when the colony voted to establish a school fund from the sale of the Litchfield County unsettled towns. The fund interest would be distributed annually to the towns and parishes solely for educational purposes.<sup>9</sup>

The first division of Wilton into school districts was voted at a Society meeting in March 1730, when Belden's Hill received one-third of the money from the colonial government for learning schools. Litchfield County.

\* Until 1927, Danbury Road passed between the houses at 51 Pimpewaug Road and 354 Danbury Road.





waug received another third for school in August and September, and Kent and Chestnut Hill received the balance, for use in keeping school as long as the money lasted. With only one teacher, his time had to be divided among districts. Rev. Gaylord was employed to continue in this fashion. Two more districts were created in 1738: Buckingham Ridge (Hurlbutt Street) and Salt Pound Hill (Middlebrook). School sessions were usually held in private homes as there is no mention of a schoolhouse until 1741. At some point, additional teachers were employed. The last areas in town to be settled were the last to get their own schools: Drum Hill (Center), Nod Hill, and Bald Hill in 1792. Georgetown school was operational by 1823, as a building for school purposes was purchased that year.

### *Division of the Lands*

With the increase in population, the future of the undivided lands within the Wilton Parish, owned since 1718 solely by the Norwalk proprietors, was a concern. Although some common lands in Norwalk and Saugatuck (then a part of Norwalk) had been divided earlier, Norwalk still had over 9,000 acres of undivided land in February 1734, most of it in Wilton and Canaan Parishes. All over Connecticut, in Farmington, Norwich, Middletown, Guilford, and New Haven, rising population had placed pressure on the proprietors for land divisions.<sup>10</sup> Norwalk was no different.

In a contentious Norwalk proprietors' meeting on February 4, 1734, the proposition to divide and sell all of the undivided lands was put to a vote. The voting procedure was somewhat involved and lengthy. Every one of the 180 proprietors had a weighted vote based upon his "rights of commonage," ranging from a high of £750 for Ebenezer Gregory, through £318 for Deacon Benjamin Hickox, to £50 each for a number of the newer proprietors. Each person was required to come forward to the clerk, record his name, and vote in the affirmative or the negative.

As one can imagine, this took a long time. When the vote was tallied, it was £9,684 in the affirmative and £4,697 negative. Since the grand total of all the voting rights was £23,904, the proposal to sell received a plurality but not the required majority. Furthermore, it was clear that only 60 percent of the rights had voted. Whereupon, "some at the meeting offered that some of the proprietors that would have been in the negative were gone, not understanding that their names were to be given in to ye clerk."<sup>11</sup> Partisan politics was at work in 1734.

In an accommodating gesture, the proprietors adjourned until the following week, when the voting was continued. The new total was £12,022 affirmative and £6,094 negative. So it passed with a bare majority of 50.3 percent of the total voting rights. A committee was appointed to develop the plan for distribution of the common land and to report back to an adjourned (continued) proprietors' meeting on March 25

However, things did not go smoothly. The next recorded entry in the proprietors' minutes book, two years later in February 1736, made reference to "an abrupt dissolution of an adjourned meeting," and voted to restart the process of measuring and pricing the parcels in the "lower commons" below the Sequest Line.\* A year later, in April 1737, the 181 proprietors at that time drew lots for the sequence of choice. In turn, each proprietor "pitched on" lands of value proportional to his total rights of commonage. No money was exchanged and all of the land was distributed. The balance of 1737 was taken up by the division of some 3,000 acres in the lower commons, most of which is now the Cranbury area of Norwalk. The proprietors paid the expenses of the land distribution, including the cost of removing numerous squatters and associated lawsuits.

The "upper commons" was an even bigger challenge, with over 6,000 acres of difficult rocky terrain to be surveyed, primarily in the Rockhouse Woods, Spectacle Bogg, Bald Hill, and Cheese Spring areas of Wilton,<sup>†</sup> and on the eastern ridges of Canaan Parish. Surveyor John Betts was assigned this daunting task in 1738 and completed his work in less than two months, describing the "lotts" and assigning a value per acre to each, based on the quality of the land.<sup>12</sup> Included were 5,363 acres, an amount that increased the Wilton land available for settlement and farming by almost 50 percent.<sup>‡</sup> Opening this land contributed directly to the population increase in Wilton Parish. A new drawing of lots was held by the proprietors in September 1738 and the land was then "pitched on." Names of the new owners for each "lott" were duly recorded in the Betts survey book. By the end of 1738 more than forty Norwalk proprietors were Wilton residents. Over the next twenty years the remainder of the newly surveyed lands were also settled.

### *New Meeting House*

The needs of a growing community and the popularity of Rev. William Gaylord led to a vote on December 21, 1736 to build a new meeting house (church). Deacon Hickox and Joseph Birchard formed a committee to "purchase a place to set up a meeting house and get ye great timber for a house according to the directions of ye Society and also to bye seder shingles to cover said house."<sup>13</sup> Fortunately, a piece of land eight rods square was acquired at no cost in May 1738 from John Marvin Sr. of Norwalk, father of John Jr. and Nathan of Wilton, as a gift to the Society, "among

\* The Sequest Line, formerly the boundary of the sequestered or common pasture lands, was approximately at the Wilton-Norwalk border.

† The 1738 survey included all of these localities. Nod Hill was not yet named.

‡ Wilton's total acreage is 17,490 acres. Prior to the opening of the "upper commons" and,





whom are some of my children." The location was on the corner of Danbury Road and a new "road to Buckingham Ridge," now Sharp Hill Road.

A building committee of David Keeler, Daniel Betts, and Matthew Marvin was appointed, and the size of the new meeting house was voted to be 48' by 36' by 22' high corner posts, probably the largest building in Wilton at the time. The entrance was to be on the broad side in the style of the day, facing Sharp Hill Road.\* Construction proceeded slowly, but by the summer of 1739 it was sufficiently usable so that it was voted on June 6, 1739 to sell the old meeting house. The land on which it sat reverted to commonage, and within a few years, all traces of the building and the surrounding burial yard had disappeared, not to be rediscovered until 1851.<sup>†</sup> Another year passed before the Society Clerk reported that the floor was laid and windows glazed in the lower level but the upper level still had only window frames and empty sashes. Six-foot square pews, common at the time, were chosen in May 1741 and a meeting with seats could finally be held in January 1742. A balcony, or "gallery," was added in 1747, and the building thus completed would serve the Society until 1790.

The first official "seating" of the new meeting house was done at a Society meeting in September 1743. (The meeting then adjourned to the house of Elias Betts nearby.) The most important members, placed in the first pew, were James Betts Sr., 81; Joseph Birchard, 69; Matthew Gregory, 63; Jachin Gregory, 61; Matthew St. John, 57; William Belden, 71; and John Stewart, 66.

### *Great Awakening*

A widespread religious revival, called the Great Awakening, took place in New England between 1740 and 1745. The revival was energized by Rev. Jonathan Edwards, a native of Connecticut and pastor at Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1734 when he launched an attack on the prevalent laxness and indifference toward religion. Edwards was a dynamic preacher and his crusade won many converts but affected only a few Connecticut towns. News of Rev. Edwards' preaching had reached England, and his works had been published there, inspiring the evangelistic English clergyman George Whitefield to visit New England. Although only twenty-five, Whitefield already had an established reputation and attracted large crowds. A man of fine physique, booming voice, and high dramatic ability, his religious eloquence swept listeners off their feet. He landed in Newport, Rhode Island in September 1740; he preached there and in Boston, and in large and small towns across Connecticut, including Norwalk. In his journal he reported:

\* See artist's conception at the beginning of this chapter.

"Tuesday October 28th . . . The weather was very cold, it having snowed a great part of the afternoon . . . at Newark [sic] twelve miles from Fairfield I was restrained much both in prayer and preaching. It rained greatly so that we had a not very large congregation, however some were affected."<sup>14</sup> He went on from there to Stamford and Rye, New York. It was said by Rev. Samuel Willard in his 1876 historical address to the Congregational Church that Mr. Whitefield also preached in the partly finished Wilton meeting house, but if so, it was not recorded in Whitefield's journal.

Inspired by Whitefield, other Congregational preachers took up the cause of returning to religious fundamentals, including Jedidiah Mills of Ripton (Shelton), Eleazer Wheelock, James Davenport, and others. Both Rev. Wheelock and Rev. Davenport were brothers-in-law of Wilton's Rev. William Gaylord, both having married Davenport women. Wheelock was already noted as a teacher of Indians, and his Moor's Indian Charity School became Dartmouth College in 1769.

At the far edge of religious extremism was Rev. James Davenport, who left his church in Southold, Long Island to range over Connecticut as an itinerant preacher. He had the unnerving habit of barging in on resident ministers and asking if they had been "saved." In New London he organized a public burning of books that he denounced as idolatrous. This led first to a 1741 decree by the Congregational "Consociation" that no minister may "enter another minister's parish and preach without the consent of the settled minister of the parish"<sup>15</sup> and eventually to a May 1742 General Assembly trial of Davenport and an associate. Davenport was found guilty due to being mentally disturbed, marched by the militia to a ship on the river and deported forthwith to Long Island!<sup>16</sup>

The Great Awakening not only raised public interest in religion but also produced a deep split within the New England Congregational Church between the "New Lights," or "Separatists," and the "Old Lights." The New Lights were religiously more fundamental but politically more liberal than the complacent and entrenched Old Lights. The New Lights denied the Halfway Covenant, a doctrine in use from the mid-1600s and officially accepted by the 1708 Saybrook Platform, allowing one to become a "halfway" member of the Congregational Church if he had been baptized as a child. The New Lights insisted that a personal religious experience was a prerequisite to membership.

Across New England, many new "Separate" churches were formed, denying the authority of the Saybrook Platform, the governing rules of the established church. The New Lights apparently exerted little influence in Wilton. No Separate church was formed in Norwalk, but the town meeting minutes of the period show that land was set aside for a "Separate" congregation should it be requested.

However, the bitter internal bickering within the church caused many to





Church in Norwalk, founded in 1737, received a boost. Dr. Samuel Belden, living in Wilton 1741-1746 and a son of John Belden, the Norwalk merchant, was the first moderator of the St. Paul's Society in 1742. Other early Wilton Anglicans were Moses Beers, Joseph Betty's, Samuel Fitch Jr. (nephew of Governor Fitch), Benjamin Keeler (of Hop Meadow), Josiah Marvin, Amos Monroe, Uriah Scribner, Samuel Stewart, and David Whelpley. In addition, Azor Belden, businessman Alexander Resseguie Jr., and weaver Alexander Sloan had strong Anglican connections.

Ironically, the Great Awakening fundamentalism led to a general demand in Connecticut for more religious tolerance of other denominations. One evidence of relaxation was the quiet omission of the restrictive religion laws from the 1750 revised Connecticut law code. However, it would be several more years before repeal of the humiliating "certificate law," which required a member of another denomination to produce documentation in order to secure exemption from the Congregational minister's tax.

The Wilton Congregational minutes include records of those who wished to attend other services: December 7, 1758, "John Truesdale shall be discharged from paying a rate to the minister in case he git a sartifikit from the Babis Society," and January 9, 1764, "Samuel Whelpley discharged from paying a tax to the standing ministry as long as he attends the babis meeting."

### *Migrations Out of Wilton*

The growth of Wilton was achieved despite the fact that a number of the founders did not stay long. By 1733, in addition to Sturdevant and the Bouton brothers, those who had already left included Nathan Olmsted, Joseph Curle, Joseph Jump, and William Drinkwater. Several others moved on within the next few years.

As new lands were opened up farther north in the state, many young Wilton families looked for opportunities in that direction. Nathan Olmsted, Ralph Keeler III, Caleb Trowbridge, and Samuel Gregory, all related through the Keelers, moved to New Fairfield between 1739 and 1746. Much of Litchfield County was owned by the colonial Connecticut General Assembly and had not yet been opened for settlement. The General Assembly planned to offer the land in these towns for sale by subscription, but was deluged by so many requests that they decided to auction shares in all seven towns at sales to be held in the various county seats throughout the state. The shares were all sold in 1737 and 1738 to prospective settlers and real estate speculators who later resold them to settlers. Nathaniel Slauson and James Stewart bought land in Kent and moved in 1738 and 1740, respectively.

For some reason, Sharon, north of Kent, attracted a sizeable group of Wilton emigrants. From St. Luke's miller was the first to move to Sharon

in 1734 before the land was officially opened to settlement.\* When the Sharon land auction was held at New Haven in October 1738, another twenty Wilton men bought land and moved their families to become pioneers in the new area. Fifty shares of land were sold, at 700 acres each.<sup>17</sup> Joseph Monroe and Ebenezer Jackson sold their neighboring farms on Chestnut Hill and became proprietors of Sharon in 1739. With them went Elihu Ketchum, 25, nephew of Captain Nathaniel, and in 1741, James Betts Jr. moved there as well. Migrants in 1745 were John Marvin Jr. and Matthew St. John with his family, including his grown sons Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Deacon Jonathan Elmer, 67, and four of his grown sons went to Sharon in 1746. His son Samuel, 26, had lost his wife and infant daughter in Wilton in 1744.<sup>†</sup> In Sharon, Samuel changed the spelling of his name to Elmore and became a military hero, serving as a captain during the French and Indian War and a colonel in the Revolution. His regiment helped to defeat Burgoyne at the watershed battle of Saratoga in 1777. After the war, Colonel Elmore and several other families from Sharon and Wilton founded the town of Elmore, Vermont. Other Wilton migrants to Sharon were Caleb Cole, Nathan Marvin, brother of John Jr., Joseph Gregory, and David Wood, son of Jonathan Jr.

Twenty-five years hence, another generation of restless Wiltonians would migrate to Ballston and Wilton in Saratoga County, New York after the French and Indian War and the 1768 treaty of Fort Stanwix made the area safe for settlement.

### *Living on the Land*

It is no surprise that so many of the younger members of the parish moved to towns where more attractive land was available. Although Wilton boasted bountiful farmland, in the eighteenth-century families required between 80 and 100 acres to produce a surplus crop for market or profit. In a typical 80-acre farm, woodlands consumed one-fourth of the land, and pasture and meadow another quarter. Rather than dividing land that would be sufficient only for one son and his family, many wills stipulated that the land should remain intact for the oldest son, with bequests of tools, household goods, and animals going to the others. By mid-eighteenth century, the median Fairfield County farm contained 125 acres and sold for £3 per acre, and 77 percent of county farms were larger than 80 acres.<sup>18</sup>

\* He later returned to Wilton, where he died in 1740.

† Mable Elmer, 22, died in childbirth, January 25, 1744. Hers is the earliest legible gravestone in Sharp Hill Cemetery. The inscription reads: "She gives life, but O pitiable consideration, gives it at ye expense of her own, and at once becomes a mother & a corpse." Sadly, her daughter died less than a year later.





Wilton settlers were initially focused on self-sufficiency. Food crops included potatoes, easy to grow and store, a variety of other vegetables, and grains including corn, oats, rye, and buckwheat. Almost no wheat was grown here as the climate was too harsh. Grain crops and an abundance of hay provided fodder for the animals. Every farm had some apple trees and their fruit was usually made into cider. A cow or two, a flock of chickens, and a few pigs supplied milk, butter, eggs, and meat. Oxen were the preferred work animals, if affordable. Few families had horses in the early days. Most clothes were homemade except for shoes, a specialty product of tanners or cordwainers. Flax for linen was commonly grown here and sheep provided wool. Local mills were soon available to assist in the processing.

Farm animals were kept initially in sequestered or common lands. Each owner identified his own livestock by cutting a unique ear mark notch, or inserting a halfpenny in the ear of his animals. The ear marks were required to be registered with the town clerk. Animals who strayed from their permitted lands were impounded in a safe enclosure, or pound, until they could be claimed by their owner. Every town and parish was required to have a pound. Among the usual elected officers in each town were a "pound keeper," or "key keeper," and a "hayward," whose responsibilities were to catch the strays, post "found" notices on the town message board, and sell the unclaimed animals. When the Danbury and Norwalk newspapers first appeared in the late eighteenth century, every issue had a number of lost and found animal notices.

## Early Mills

As soon as the settlers made their way into the northern reaches of Norwalk, they needed mills for wood, cloth, and grain. Benjamin Hickox's first grist mill was operating by 1723, and perhaps earlier. Between that date and the end of the eighteenth century, at least nine water-powered mills were built in Wilton. Jacob Patchen and Josiah Marvin were partners with Hickox at his mill from 1739 to 1745. After Benjamin Hickox died in 1745 the mill ownership passed to his sons Silas and Ezra.

Wilton's first sawmill was built in 1725 near the Hickox grist mill. Samuel Betts Sr., who owned the land, contracted with Benjamin Hickox and Matthew St. John "to erect a sawmill on ye upper falls above ye grist mill that stands on ye west branch of Pimpewaug River."<sup>19</sup> The sawmill was later moved below and across the stream from the grist mill and remained in use until the 1890s, as Tim Merwin (born 1883) remembered getting a whipping as a boy for riding a log through the mill.

The first mill of any type on the Norwalk River was a sawmill built about 1750 at the Pimpewaug Ford (below School Road) jointly by James Olmsted and Daniel Belden II, elder son of William. This mill changed hands



*Built at the falls on Comstock Brook by Benjamin Hickox in 1723 and rebuilt several times, Wilton's oldest mill appeared this way in the early twentieth century, when it was the Merwin Mill. Taken down in 1938.*

numerous times, being owned successively by Ichabod Cole, Jesse Ogden during the Revolution, Thomas and Samuel Belden, sons of John II, and several others. In 1826 Aaron Chichester operated a multi-purpose grist, flax, and carding mill\* there. By 1856 it was a hoe factory owned by Charles E. Gregory. Gregory's descendants still operate a sawmill there, although no longer powered by water.

The second mill on the Norwalk River, also a sawmill, was built north of Seeley Road in about 1754 by Josiah Marvin and Nathan Hubbell Jr. Tracking through a maze of deeds shows that no less than sixteen different men owned shares of this mill between 1754 and 1790, during which time it apparently burned and was rebuilt.

Other early mills in the Falls Branch (Comstock Brook) valley were the sawmill of Alexander Resseguie Jr. in 1752 on the stream behind his house

\* Carding was the process of untangling the short fibers of wool by combing it over wooden blocks covered with short metal spikes. A water-powered mill could card in one hour the same amount of wool that a person did in a week.





at 422 Ridgefield Road, Enoch Tuttle's sawmill built on Spectacle Brook (at 201 Millstone Road) about 1780, and Nathan Davenport's 1791 fulling mill\* located behind his house at 108 Ridgefield Road. Three early mills also were built on the West Branch of the Norwalk River (Silvermine River) dividing Wilton from Canaan Parish. The Buttery sawmill, originating in 1688 and rebuilt several times, operated continuously until washed out by the 1955 flood.

Most of the millstones for the grist mills came from the quarry in North Wilton now known as Quarry Head Park. This was the first quarry in Wilton and is mentioned in land records as early as 1739 when the granite there was found to be suitable for milling purposes. An essential feature of a millstone is that it should be hard enough to grind grain without grinding itself into powder, but soft enough to sharpen the grooves when necessary. Land records in 1740 and 1748 refer to "Milestone Hill" or "Millstone Hill" as a landmark for property transactions in the vicinity. Later the nearby road was given the name Millstone Road. Millstone Quarry was worked for over 150 years and survived until near the end of the nineteenth century. Rev. Selleck in his *Norwalk* book of 1896 described it as "the site of granite conformations of surprising singularity and decidedly romantic environment."<sup>20</sup>

## Georgetown

Georgetown lagged behind Pimpewaug, Belden Hill, and Chestnut Hill in attracting settlers due to its remoteness from the business centers of Norwalk, Ridgefield, and Danbury. Also, the main highway between Norwalk and Danbury followed Old Mill Road on the east bank of the Norwalk River and provided rather poor access to the Georgetown district. The earliest landowner in Georgetown was John Copp, former Town Clerk of both Norwalk and Ridgefield, who began acquiring land there in 1710, but kept his residence in Norwalk. The earliest Georgetown settler was probably Robert Rumsey, who in 1721 bought land in Long Hollow and built a house about where Wilton, Redding, and Weston all intersect.

When John Copp died in 1749, his farm covered 300 acres, encompassing much of present-day Georgetown. Two-thirds of this land passed to Copp's stepsons, John Belden II and Dr. Samuel Belden, whose mother had married Copp after John Belden I died in 1713. Neither step-son ever lived in Georgetown but in 1760 John Belden III built the first business in Georgetown, a sawmill on the Norwalk River in the Long Hollow gorge

\* In the process of fulling, loosely woven woolen cloth was placed in a box with hot water, soap, and fuller's earth. Here a stamper, or stock of wood, driven by water power, went back and forth, knocking the cloth, rolling and shrinking it. This cleansed the wool of its animal grease and soil and shrunk the cloth to a firmer weave. It was then pressed into folds, stretched and dried. The mention of fulling in the early records of Georgetown is significant.

now traversed by Old Mill Road. The river in this section was ideally suited for water power, rushing downstream between two steep banks. Over the years, a number of mills were built in this narrow valley.

Other early Georgetown settlers were John Morgan and Noah St. John, both about 1755. Morgan had a farm of 100 acres at the northeast corner of Wilton, near the point where Peaceable Street joins Danbury Road. St. John bought 50 acres from the Copp's farm heirs and built on Chicken's Path about where Gilbert and Bennett School now stands.

In 1766, Belden sold a half interest in his mill to George Abbott, brother of Ebenezer Abbott of Chestnut Hill, who erected a grist mill adjacent to the sawmill and built himself a house to the north over the Redding line. The Abbott mills were fallen down or washed away by the time of his death in 1791. A few years later, at a July 4 celebration, the local residents decided that the district should have a name. As the story goes, they chose Georgetown in honor of George Abbott, who by then was dead and gone, but the name stuck.<sup>21</sup>

Farther south, on the west face of the same "Honey Hill," Alexander Resseguie Jr., mill owner on Ridgefield Road and husband of Thankful Belden, inherited from his father in 1752 a 40-acre property on which there was reportedly a silver mine. In 1765, Resseguie leased the mining rights (for 100 years) to a group of nine men, including Matthew Mead, Matthew Marvin V. James and Silas Olmstead, Samuel Betts, Nathan Hubbell, Joseph Rockwell Jr., Jesse Ogden, all of Wilton, and Matthias Fountain from Bedford. The partners were granted rights to extract "lead, copper, tin, and all other ores and minerals, and to erect smelters."<sup>22</sup> According to Hurd's *History of Fairfield County*, a shaft about fifty feet deep was dug, with horizontal tunnels at the bottom, and the mine was worked for two years or so in search of ore. Then without notice, the manager working the mine took away all of the ore to be "examined," and he disappeared, leaving the shareholders with nothing. It was never known whether any silver had ever been found. The mine was reopened at least three more times over the next two hundred years, without the discovery of any ores or minerals.\*

## Inns and Taverns

The post of innkeeper was compulsory in every town, a requirement of the Connecticut Code of 1650. The innkeeper, or taverner, had to provide food, lodging, and stabling for at least two horses. It has been asked why some of the more affluent families kept taverns. The explanation is that most of the travelers were well-to-do and expected good food and good company wherever they would spend the night. The hosts usually were well-educated and

\* See Chantem Carme and Niles





well-informed on current events and most likely had adequate servant help to assist in attending to visitors. This description fits the Lambert house, one of the early Wilton taverns.

David Lambert was appointed taverner by the Congregational Society in 1727 and began receiving guests but did not get a County Court tavern license until 1748. He continued his tavern until the 1760s. His successor as South Wilton taverner was his neighbor across the street, Benjamin Betts, who held a license in 1762–64, for a small house no longer standing.

The earliest taverns in Wilton to get County Court licenses were those of the brothers Stephen and Nathan Betts, sons of Samuel, a leading Wilton landowner. Stephen's tavern was in Pimpewaug in the house he bought from Nathan, near the present entrance to the Wilton "Y." He received his license in 1731 and kept it until 1743.

His brother Nathan held a license in 1734 and 1735 for a tavern on Ridgefield Road, where it met Drum Hill Road. Cordwainer Solomon Noble, Nathan Betts's brother-in-law, reopened the Betts tavern in 1749, then sold it six years later to Michael Middlebrook, the first of his family in Wilton. Middlebrook did not renew a tavern license but may have continued to receive travelers. His son Summers (1748–1843) operated a tavern at this location after the Revolution.

Jeremiah Mead was the next Wilton name appearing on the tavern license list, in 1741, at the corner of DeForest and Ridgefield Roads, in a house that was probably built fifteen years earlier and still stands, although expanded and rebuilt. Mead's two illustrious sons born in this house were



*Jeremiah Mead's house and tavern, built at 2 DeForest Road about 1727. Rebuilt on the same site.*

Captain Thaddeus, a Wilton military leader who lost his life in the French and Indian War, and Colonel Matthew, a Revolutionary hero and moderator of the first Wilton Town Meeting in 1802.

Zebulon Crane, husband of Sarah Belden, received a tavern license in 1750–51 for a house on the northwest corner of (Old) Ridgefield and Danbury Roads. After changing hands several times, it became Captain Samuel Belden's tavern and store in 1771. His son, Major Samuel Belden, continued the store, but perhaps not the tavern, until his death in 1860. The building fell down a few years afterwards.<sup>23</sup> Matthew Marvin V received a tavern license in 1762 for his house at 405 Danbury Road, which operated continuously for thirty years, longer than any other Wilton tavern. The Marvin Tavern is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Other taverns on the road to Danbury were those of Daniel Betts at the corner of Kent and Danbury Roads; Clapp Raymond at 249 Danbury Road during the time of the Revolution and Elias Sturges in the same house fifty years later; Aaron Fox at 354 Danbury Road in Pimpewaug south of Cole's bridge; Azor Belden in his home at 539 Danbury Road; and Levi Taylor II in Georgetown.

Travelers to Ridgefield and North Salem on Belden Hill and Ridgefield Road could find haven at the taverns of Jehu Keeler at 468 Belden Hill on the corner of Old Belden Hill, operating around the time of the Revolution; Jemmy James on Belden Hill in 1822, at the northwest corner of New Canaan Road in a house that later became the Josiah Gilbert farmhouse; Ezra Gregory II in the Gregory homestead on Belden Hill, before he moved to Bridgeport in 1793; Ezra Hickox on Ridgefield Road north of the Nod Hill corner; and Levi Lyons' Halfway House at 923 Ridgefield Road, dating from 1807 and possibly earlier.\*

### *Slaves, Blacks, Spruce Bank Cemetery*

Some slaves in Connecticut were Indian and some African, but there were never many. The colony held 4,000 slaves out of a total population of close to 130,000 in 1755. By 1774, the census showed 5,101 blacks, not all of whom were slaves, out of a total population of 197,842.<sup>24</sup> In that year the Colonial General Assembly passed a law prohibiting importation of any additional slaves into the colony. The number of free blacks at that time was not known, but about 300 served with the Revolutionary army. After the war, in 1784, Connecticut enacted a gradual emancipation law giving freedom to all slaves born after that date when they reached age twenty-five. The law was modified in 1797 to grant freedom at the twenty-first birthday.

\* Also known as the Red Lion Inn, it was halfway between Norwalk and North Salem. Local tradition said that General Israel Putnam stayed there on occasion during the winter of 1776.





In Wilton, slaves had never been numerous. A few are mentioned in early church records; Ham, a "black servant child" of Rev. Gaylord, died in 1735 in his twelfth year; Peter, a black servant of Deacon Hickox died in 1741; and Cesar, an educated black slave of Moses Comstock, joined the church in October 1741. Norwalk town records of January 1744 show that Captain Samuel Keeler of Wilton Parish gave "Negro Hone" to his son Matthew. Matthew Keeler granted freedom to a slave named Henry Lukas, perhaps the same man, in 1747, and gave him a house. David Lambert bought "Coffee," age 11, for £50 in 1760.

Church proceedings recorded a number of baptisms of blacks in the 1750s and 1760s, including Alexander Resseguie's black slave Venus, Ezra Hickox's black servant child Law, Ensign Matthew Gregory's "Negro wench," Benjamin Betts's black servant child Peg, and Matthew Marvin's servant children Dick and Phyllis. A marriage was recorded in 1777 between a servant woman of Blackleach Jessup and Amos, a servant of Deacon Andrews of Norfield.

The first federal census in 1790 showed twelve slaves in Wilton and by 1810 there were sixteen out of a total population of 1,728, all owned by a relatively few wealthy families such as the Marvins, Middlebrooks, St. Johns, and Beldens.

The first slaves were freed in 1809 under the 1784 emancipation law and many other Connecticut slaves were voluntarily released by their owners in the next few years. In 1810, Samuel Middlebrook filed papers with the Wilton Town Clerk to emancipate his slave Phebe. Matthew Marvin VI did the same in 1812 for his black woman, Betty, 29.<sup>25</sup>

David Van Hoosear, writing a hundred years ago, reported the local tradition of a slave cemetery, Spruce Bank, between the highway and the Norwalk River near the location of the Danbury Road bridge over the railroad north of Pimpewaug Road.<sup>26</sup> When Daniel Belden bought three acres from the Town of Norwalk in 1749 at this location on the east side of the river for a mill site, the deed stated: "reserving within said bounds one rood (one-quarter acre) of land where the burial place now is, with liberty for persons to pass and repass to said burial ground."<sup>27</sup> When the grist mill was sold in 1759 and again in 1762, one-quarter acre was reserved for the "burying place."<sup>28</sup> Clearly, this was once a graveyard, but whether for slaves or not is not certain. No evidence of graves or gravestones has ever been found, but over two hundred years of erosion and flood waters have passed over the site since the probable last burial here.

### *Wilton Cemeteries*

The earliest Wilton burial ground was adjacent to the first meeting house on Wolfpit Road. The exact location has been lost to history, as the site was used only between 1726 and 1720. Simple fieldstones set on edge

served as gravestones. Among Wilton's pioneers who were probably buried there were Jonathan Wood, 1727; George Abbott, 1731; Deacon James Trowbridge, 1732; John Dunning, 1733; Ebenezer Keeler, 1735; Stephen Morehouse, 1737; and Nathaniel Ketchum, 1738.

After 1738, the new cemetery surrounded the new meeting house on Sharp Hill Road on the land that John Marvin Sr. of Norwalk gave to the Society. The Society voted in December 1745 "to look into the site of the old burial ground on Kent Street (Danbury Road) and to fence it, provided the sum necessary be raised by subscription and the Society not be held responsible for [it]." (Liability issues were a concern even in 1745.) It is not recorded whether the fence was ever built, but when the railroad was built over a hundred years later, the site of the first cemetery was long lost to memory.

In 1755, an additional half-acre was purchased from Richard Dunning to add to Sharp Hill Cemetery. The earliest legible inscribed gravestone here is that of Mable Elmer on January 25, 1744. A year later, a more elegant carved stone was placed at the grave of one of Wilton's leading citizens and its first miller, Deacon Benjamin Hickox. Many of the early graves are marked only with fieldstones on edge. For the next fifty years, Sharp Hill Cemetery was the only cemetery in town. Eighteen Revolutionary and six French and Indian War veterans are buried there. Sharp Hill continued to be used heavily through the early years of the nineteenth century but there were only a few scattered burials after 1850. The last two burials were those of summer residents Katherine and Nelson Spencer (in 1916 and 1934), who left an endowment for maintenance of the cemetery grounds. It is still owned by the Congregational Church.

A Comstock family cemetery was established in 1782 on the eastern edge of Comstock Ridge (on Ridgefield Road at Signal Hill North) upon the death of Abigail, first wife of Benajah Strong Comstock. Over the next few years, several other family members were buried there, including B. Strong's more famous brother, Major Samuel Comstock. In 1805 the town leased the site as a public cemetery from the Comstock family for \$11.72 for the period of forty-five years. Over 150 persons were buried here during that period, including seven veterans of the Revolutionary War. As in the other early cemeteries, many graves are marked only with fieldstones set neatly in rows. Ironically, the last burial was that of Betty Comstock, second wife of B. Strong, in 1851.

About 1900, when the Comstock family could not get either the town or the family descendants to maintain the Comstock Cemetery grounds, they removed all seven members of their family buried there and moved them to Hillside Cemetery with their gravestones, except for the old stones for B. Strong and Betty, which were left where they fell in the old cemetery. In 1938, a Town Meeting considered the question of funds for maintenance of Comstock Cemetery. At the time, Georgianna Comstock, daughter of longtime School Board Chairman Strong Comstock, reminded the Town Meet-





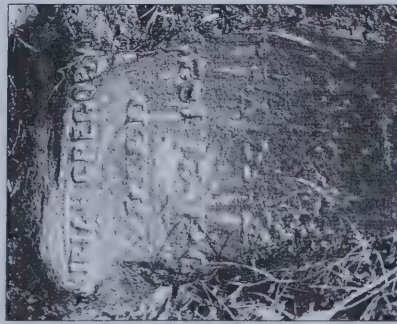
ing that the cemetery was still privately owned and part of her late father's estate, which was on the market. Several years later, Signal Hill Road was developed on the site. The cemetery is now owned and protected by the Wilton Land Conservation Trust.

Hillside, on Ridgefield Road, Wilton's largest cemetery, was first known as Joe's Hill, named for its owner, Jonathan Middlebrook. The northernmost portion is the oldest, having first been used for burials about 1817. A year later, Mr. Middlebrook deeded the one-acre burial plot to the Congregational Society, reserving the right during his lifetime to maintain the orchard and to use the land to pasture his cows. Most of the eighteen Revolutionary veterans at Hillside are in this old section. Adjacent to the south, Ebenezer G. Betts operated a private cemetery starting in 1853. After his death, his widow willed this cemetery to her sister, Virginia Middlebrook Wilkinson, and she gave it to the Congregational Society in 1918, thereby joining it to the existing Hillside Cemetery. Additional lands were purchased in 1936 and 1950, providing ample room for growth.

St. Matthew's Cemetery got its start in 1815 when John James Lambert donated one acre of land on Danbury Road south of the church. His brother-in-law George Crookshank gave another half acre in 1852 and more land was added later. The wrought iron fence and gate were a gift in 1890 from the will of Julia Abby Davenport, daughter of Judge George Davenport.

Zion's Hill Cemetery on Danbury Road and Bald Hill Cemetery on Ridgefield Road were laid out by Methodist churches, in 1847 and 1850 respectively. Wilton's last Civil War veteran, Hezekiah Osborn, is buried at Zion's Hill, along with eighteen other veterans of that conflict. Bald Hill is now managed by an independent cemetery association under the protective wing of the Wilton Historical Society. Six Civil War veterans are buried there.

The DeForest family cemetery is on DeForest Road. Other family cemeteries no longer in use are Ruscoe, on the west side of Silver Spring Road near the New York state line; Batterson, at 957 Danbury Road in Georgetown; and Morgan, on the east side of Ridgefield Road near the Marhofer Fire Station. Albert Allen, one of Wilton's casualties in the Civil War, is buried in the Morgan Cemetery. Scout troops and other volunteers have periodically provided maintenance to these cemeteries as ownership is often unclear.



*Uriah Gregory's gravestone, now buried in the old Hoyt Cemetery.*

Other privately owned cemeteries have disappeared as land has been sold and resold and developed. In 1931, wealthy land-owner Robert Swaine, whose estate was at the corner of Silver Spring Road and Ruscoe Road, convinced the town to relocate Silver Spring eastward on land that he owned, and to abandon the old right-of-way in his favor. Survey map 239 on file in the Town Clerk's office clearly shows two cemeteries, one to the west (Ruscoe Cemetery) and one to the east of the old Silver Spring Road (Hoyt Cemetery). The Hoyt Cemetery has completely disappeared underneath a landscaped lawn, although as recently as 1992, a few fallen grave-stones could still be seen in the area.

### *Wilton in 1770*

There are 203 property owners listed in the Wilton tax list for 1770, three times the number in 1733. On a yellowed piece of paper in the History Room files are listed the names of all property owners and the valuation assigned to each property in English pounds, shillings, and pence.\* One hundred thirty families, or 64 percent, were associated with the Congregational Church, leaving seventy-three families who were not, a surprisingly high percentage of other denominations and unaffiliated. The list divided the town into four quadrants: northeast, northwest, southeast, and southwest, with the base point near what is now Wilton Center. The most populous sector, with 62 properties, was the southwest, followed by the northwest with 56, northeast with 52, and the southeast with 33.

The entire colony of Connecticut was growing rapidly. Best estimates place the population at 38,000 in 1730 and nearly 200,000 by 1774.<sup>29</sup> Wilton's sizeable growth was achieved despite the exodus of over half of the forty-two January 1727 founders, twenty-three of whom left Wilton by 1747 for new opportunities and new lands.

Based on baptismal and other family records available for some of the names listed, young Wilton families each had an average of 3.5 children at home, not counting those possibly grown and gone. Not every family in town is listed, only those owning taxable property. Nor did every property owner live on his land. Also, many families in those days had aged parents or in-laws living in the household. For all of those reasons, an exact population count is not possible from the existing data, but it would seem that the total was between 1,000 and 1,100 individuals. Many of the 1770 residents were descendants of the original settlers, but there were new families arriving every year from other New England communities.

\* G. Evans Hubbard attributed the date of 1768 to this list, but it was written on a piece of paper obviously used first to design a gravestone inscription for Elizabeth Lambert Lockwood, who died April 3, 1770.

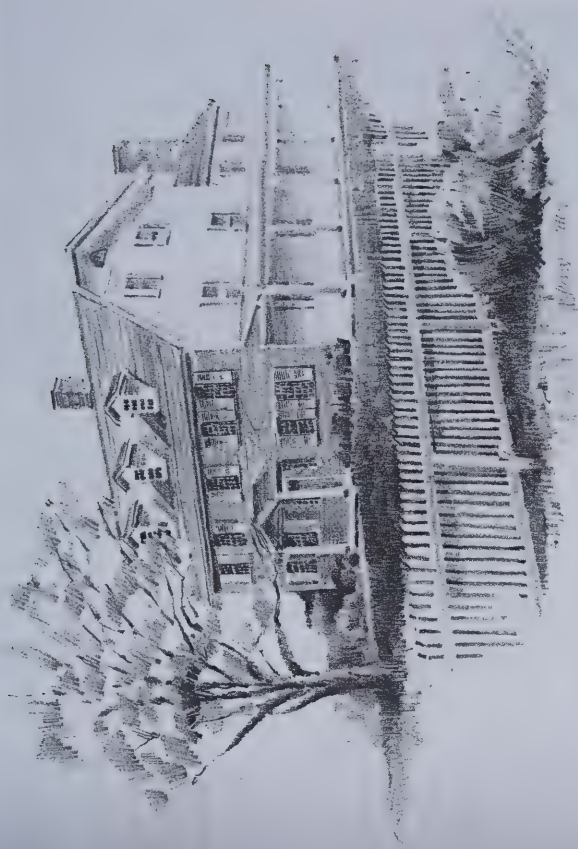




The twenty-one wealthiest Wilton landowners in 1770 are listed below, along with the quadrant where they lived, their church affiliation if known, and their sons who later served in the Revolutionary War:

NAME	QUAD.	PROPERTY VALUE	CHURCH	SONS IN REVOLUTION
Samuel Keeler III	NW	£203-2s	Cong.	Isaiah
James Olmstead III	NE	202-15	Cong.	Justus, Nathan
John Keeler III	SW	194	Cong.	David III
Blackleach Jessup	SE	165-2	Cong.	
Elias Betts	SW	164-7	Cong.	Moses, Aaron, Isaiah
Ezra Gregory	SW	161-2	Cong.	Abraham, Ezra, Matthew, Moses
Sarah Olmstead	NE	160-13	Cong.	Samuel, Moses
Michael Middlebrook	NW	141-11		Summers, Jonathan, Michael Jr., Elias
Thaddeus Morehouse	NW	140-13		
Nathan Comstock	NW	138-9	Cong.	Samuel, Aaron, B. Strong
James Olmsted IV	NW	136-1	Cong.	James V, Isaac
David Whelpley	NW	126-1	Cong.	James
Lambert family	SW	124-15	Episc.	
Ebenezer Ketchum	NE	123-8	Cong.	
Azor Belden	NE	121-1	Episc.	Azor II
Benjamin Keeler	NW	118-7		
Samuel Fitch Jr.	SE	117-13	Episc.	Samuel
Ebenezer Gregory	SW	116-16	Cong.	Aaron
Lydia Fitch	SE	112-5	Episc.	Ebenezer Jr., Jabez
William Whitlock	NW	111-15		
Ebenezer Nash	NW	111-2		Ebenezer

From these twenty-one families came twenty-nine Revolutionary soldiers, so it is not surprising that less than ten years later Wilton sent more than 300 men to serve. Another 50 percent, or 500 people, were added to Wilton's population in the next thirty years, as an existing document from 1801 shows that the population at that time was 300 families, and 1,500 to 1,600 people.



## THREE



## Wilton Families

Hubbard's Legacy ♦ Abbott Family ♦ Belden Family ♦  
 Betts Family ♦ Comstock Family ♦ Davenport Family ♦  
 DeForest Family ♦ Fitch Family ♦ Gilbert Family  
 Gregory Family ♦ Hurlbutt/Holybert Family ♦ Keeler  
 Family ♦ Lambert Family ♦ Middlebrook Family ♦  
 Ogden Family ♦ Olmsted/Olmstead Family ♦  
 Raymond/Ambler Family ♦ Sturges Family





granddaughter of Rev. William Gaylord. Charles and Sarah inherited the historic Gaylord house, built in 1726 for Wilton's first minister on the hill between the present Gaylord Drives North and South. Their children included Emily, wife of teacher Augustus Whitlock, and Rev. John Gaylord Davenport (1840-1922), an eminent Congregational minister spanning a forty-three-year period with pastorates in Bridgeport and Waterbury. Rev. Davenport retained a strong attachment to his native town and returned on all ceremonial occasions to speak or deliver an original poem. For the 1901 Congregational Church celebration, Rev. Davenport composed a song "Wilton." He published a book of recollections of his early life in Wilton.<sup>4</sup> His son Clarence, born in Wilton in 1868, died in the Spanish-American War. His daughter Lillian Davenport Jones lived for many years in Wilton in the 165 Drum Hill house where Moses Stuart was born.

### DeForest Family

Isaac DeForest, the patriarch of the family, was born in Flanders (now part of Belgium) and migrated to New Amsterdam (New York) in 1636. Their son David was born in New York in 1679 and moved to Stratford. David II, born in Stratford in 1702, became a Norwalk proprietor, joined the Wilton church in 1733, and died in 1748. He left five sons and two daughters. Like many others, the family would be split in loyalties by the American Revolution.

David DeForest II's oldest son, Hezekiah, born in 1726, was a captain of the Troop of Horse (mounted militia), served in the French and Indian War, and became a significant land baron in Wilton. He first managed the family's 150-acre farm after the death of his father, then bought and sold lands. He bought the tavern at the Danbury-Ridgefield Road corner from Zebulon Crane, then bought the old Slauson house at Pimpewaug Ford (51 Pimpewaug Road), and from the heirs of Matthew St. John he bought a sizeable tract of land between the Norwalk River and the Falls Branch north of the Hickox grist mill. All of these he sold at a profit. Rebecca, one of his daughters, married Aaron Comstock, a Revolutionary soldier and son of Nathan. Another daughter, Mary, married Lieutenant Matthew Gregory, a Revolutionary officer and son of Ezra. Hezekiah's son Uriah served in the Revolution.

Esther, daughter of David DeForest II, married Job Burlock, a famous Wilton Tory during the Revolution who came to an untimely end (see Chapter Four). Esther went to Nova Scotia after the war.

David II's next son, David III, married Sarah Olmsted, daughter of Deacon James Olmsted, the second wealthiest man in the parish as measured by the 1770 tax list. Their sons David IV, Samuel, and Isaac all served in the Revolution. A fourth son, Eliud, born too late for the war, acquired 250 acres in the DeForest Road area, including the homestead of Eli DeForest Road and the family cemetery. Cyrus, grandson of Eli

married Susan Olmstead, daughter of Aaron Olmstead II. Their son Willis DeForest (1865-1920) was a foreman at Gilbert & Bennett Manufacturing Co., and his son Willis, born in 1900, an auto mechanic in Branchville, was Wilton's last native World War I veteran when he died in 1995.

Captain Elihu DeForest, the fourth son of David II, married Rachel Lambert, daughter of David Lambert. He served in the French and Indian War and was Wilton Society tax collector in 1768, then sold his house to Rev. Isaac Lewis and moved to Ridgebury, from where he served in the Revolution in the American army. His son David L. also served.

Elihu's younger brother, Lieutenant Ephraim, served in the French and Indian War and married Sarah Betts, daughter of Nathan. They went to New Milford, then Redding in 1771, and from there he joined the infamous Prince of Wales Regiment of Americans fighting on the side of the British. After the war, they migrated to Nova Scotia along with his sister, the widow Esther Burlock.

Overall, nine members of David DeForest's extended family fought for the Patriots and two were dedicated Loyalists who left the United States after the war.



*Cyrus DeForest and wife Susan Olmstead, about 1860.*

### Fitch Family

Thomas I sailed from England in the 1630s and arrived in Norwalk in 1652. He purchased Norwalk Home Lot XII in 1654. His great-grandson was Governor Thomas Fitch (1700-1774), who served as colonial governor from 1754 until 1766, when he was forced to retire because of his support for the crown. Both Governor Fitch and his brother Samuel (1701-1787) had connections to Wilton, although neither ever lived here.

Ebenezer and Timothy, third and fourth sons of the governor, lived in Wilton on Chestnut Hill. Ebenezer died here in 1762 at age thirty-three. His widow Lydia had one of the top property values on the 1770 tax list. Their sons Jabez and Ebenezer II served in the Revolution, then in about 1785 all five children, their spouses, and widow Lydia relocated to Ballston, New York.





Samuel's daughter Elizabeth married Nehemiah Rogers, a wealthy merchant of Norwalk. Their daughter Susannah Rogers married David Lambert II of Wilton and their son Nehemiah Rogers II fought for the British during the Revolution.

Samuel II, son of Samuel, married Elizabeth Platt and settled on Chestnut Hill in Wilton in about 1756. He was a vestryman of St. Paul's Anglican Church in 1757 and served on the Wilton School Committee, but was discharged from the care of the school money in 1775 for his Tory beliefs. He died in Wilton in 1811. His two sons, Joseph Platt (1753-1797) and Samuel III (1761-1827) both established homes in Wilton. Joseph Platt's house has survived at 250 Danbury Road. He and his wife Eunice Betts did not have any children who survived them.

Samuel III's son Joseph Platt II (1790-1868) bought the former Clapp Raymond house at 249 Danbury Road from the heirs of Elias Sturges in

### FITCH FAMILY - ABRIDGED GENEALOGY

THOMAS FITCH (NORWALK SETTLER)

THOMAS II

THOMAS III

GOVERNOR THOMAS IV (1700-1774)

EBENEZER (1720-1762) (WILTON RESIDENT) M. LYDIA MILLS

TIMOTHY (1735-1802) (WILTON RESIDENT) M. ESTHER PLATT

HANNAH M. AZOR BELDEN II

SAMUEL M. SUSANNAH PLATT

SAMUEL II (1727-1811) (WILTON RESIDENT) M. ELIZABETH PLATT

JOSEPH PLATT FITCH (1753-1797) M. EUNICE BETTS

SAMUEL III

JOSEPH PLATT II (1790-1868) M. EMMA SHERMAN

MARY M. JOHN RANDALL STURGES

SHERMAN PLATT M. SARAH MARIA JONES

EDWARD

ARTHUR

HELEN ELIZABETH "NELLIE" M. JOHN B. STURGES

AGNES M. DAVID OGDEN

HARRIET M. DANIEL TELFORD

FRANCES M. JOHN M. BELDEN

RICHARD M. BERTHA BRADY, DIVORCED

ELIZABETH (1728-1812) M. NEHEMIAH ROGERS (1718-1760)

SUSANNAH (1752-1829) M. DAVID LAMBERT II

NEHEMIAH II (TORY, BRITISH SOLDIER, LATER NEW YORK MERCHANT)

ESTHER M. ARCHIBALD GRACIE



*Home of the Fitch family from 1840 to 1930. Built by Clapp Raymond in 1772 at 249 Danbury Road in front of his older house. Now owned by Wilton Historical Society.*

1840. A man of many talents, he was a farmer, blacksmith, militiaman during the War of 1812, merchant, postmaster, staunch Democrat, and chorister of St. Matthew's Church. A few rods south of his house he built a store in the 1840s; it was destroyed by fire in 1862. He and his wife Emma Sherman had three children: Mary Elizabeth, Sherman Platt, and Harriet. Mary Elizabeth married John Randall Sturges (see Sturges).

Harriet, the youngest, married first Rev. Abel Ogdén, then after his death Rev. Luther Gregory. After Rev. Gregory's death in 1864 she lived for many years with her only daughter Mary (Minnie) Fitch Gregory at 250 Danbury Road. After Harriet's death, Minnie Gregory kept a tea room there in the early 1900s.

Sherman Platt Fitch (1822-1894), only son of Joseph Platt II, married Sarah Maria Jones of Westport in 1847 and at first lived in the house of his great uncle, Joseph Platt Fitch I, at 250 Danbury Road, then moved across the street to the family homestead. After the family store burned, he gave up the business and took a position in the New York Customs House, becoming possibly Wilton's first commuter, for twenty-five years until 1887. He and Sarah had seven talented and literate children who left many interesting records of their lives in Wilton in the late 1800s—diaries, photographs, letters, and scrapbooks.

Their first born, Edward, was a businessman in New York City. The second, Arthur Treat Fitch, married an English woman and moved to England. He and his descendants have kept in touch with Wilton. Helen Elizabeth (Nellie) (1853-1911) married John Burr Sturges of Wilton and raised a family in the Sturges homestead on Hurlbutt Street.

Agnes (1854-1942) married lawyer David Ogdén of Wilton. Harriet mar-





Belden of Danbury, a son of Nathan Marvin Belden of Wilton. The youngest, Richard (1866-1943), with interests as diverse as his grandfather, married and was later divorced from Bertha Brady, a Wilton schoolteacher. Richard was a Wilton postmaster, Town Clerk, storekeeper, writer, photographer, staunch Republican, and the last Fitch in Wilton. Two of his children died young and a third, Samuel, ran away from home as a teenager. In his later years, Richard had mental problems. Shortly after he went to a mental institution in 1930, the Raymond/Fitch house was sold out of the family.

### *Gilbert Family*

Gilbert immigrants in America were Thomas (born 1620) and his brother Obadiah (born 1630). Obadiah's grandson Benjamin, born in Fairfield in 1605, was the first of his family in Wilton, buying 98 acres on Buckingham Ridge (Hurlbutt Street) in 1746. He and his son Moses (1717-1785) joined the Congregational Church shortly thereafter. Moses had four sons who served in the Revolution: Captain Nathan, Sergeant Moses, Lieutenant Gershom, and Lieutenant Thaddeus.

Another descendant of Obadiah was Benjamin Gilbert (1789-1847), founder of Gilbert & Bennett Manufacturing Co. The business was greatly expanded by his sons, particularly Edwin (1822-1906), who was a generous benefactor of Georgetown. Edwin's wife was a niece of Colonel George Middlebrook.

Benjamin's brother Ebenezer (1791-1834) married Elizabeth Abbott, daughter of Ebenezer Abbott II, one of several marriages between Abbotts and Gilberts. Their son George Benjamin Gilbert, a farmer and shoemaker, built a house on Sharp Hill Road about 1857. The talk of the neighborhood in 1861 was when George B.'s daughter Mary Eliza, 19, married John Jackson, 39. Their sons were the well-known fruit farmers, John Clarence Jackson on Sturges Ridge and Harry Jackson on Chestnut Hill. Harmon Gilbert, brother of George B. and another shoemaker on Hurlbutt Street, was the father of Deacon Thomas Frank Gilbert (1853-1923), Wilton merchant and liveryman.

Deacon Benezah Gilbert (1815-1897), descended from Thomas Gilbert the immigrant, was born in South Salem, New York. He married Fanny Keeler, daughter of wealthy Wilton farmer Isaiah Keeler, and established a dairy farm at the northwest corner of Belden Hill and New Canaan Roads in 1850. Their son Deacon Josiah Gilbert married Elizabeth Olmstead, daughter of Professor Edward Olmstead. He carried on the Gilbert dairy farm, as did Josiah's oldest son, Edward Olmstead Gilbert. Edward was best man at his cousin Tim Merwin's wedding in 1909 to Florence Gilbert, daughter of Deacon Thomas Frank Gilbert, from the Obadiah branch of the family. Josiah's second son, Thomas J., served in World War I and migrated west.

Nod Hill. George died in 1973 but his wife, Kathryn Scallon Gilbert lived until October 2002, dying at the age of 107.

### *Gregory Family*

Matthew (1680-1777) and Jachin Gregory II\* (1682-1747), born in Norwalk, were sons of Jachin and grandsons of John Gregory, a 1653 Norwalk settler and owner of Norwalk Home Lot I. When John Gregory died in 1689, his extensive land holdings were divided among his children and grandchildren. Matthew and Jachin II thus became major landowners in Wilton as well as proprietors in Norwalk. Jachin II moved to Wilton about 1718 and was a signer of the 1726 petition. Matthew came about fifteen years later, along with their nephew Samuel. Samuel moved on to New Fairfield in 1746 and Jachin died in 1747.

Matthew Gregory married Hannah Keeler, sister of John and David Keeler, both also Belden Hill residents and both signers of the 1726 petition. Matthew built the Gregory house at 169 Belden Hill in 1740 and was ordained a deacon in the church at the age of seventy-two in 1752. He lived twenty-five more years, to the beginning years of the Revolution, dying in 1777 at the great age of ninety-seven.

His elder son Matthew II (1711-1756) and an ensign of the militia, died at forty-five. His younger son Ezra (1726-1776) was in charge of the Patriot military stores at Danbury until his death at age fifty at the beginning of the Revolution. Ezra married Hannah Betts, daughter of Daniel II and Sarah Comstock Betts. Four of their sons, Abraham, Ezra, Matthew, and Moses, served in the Revolution. A fifth son, Benjamin, was too young to serve. Benjamin's daughter Clara, born in 1807, married the famous Western artist George Catlin.

Matthew Gregory II's son, Deacon Daniel, married Esther Hickox, granddaughter of the first Wilton miller Benjamin Hickox, and built the house at the Belden Hill-Ridgefield Road intersection (11 Belden Hill) in 1775. Daniel and his brother-in-law Nathan Hickox gave the land for the third and present Congregational meeting house in 1790. His widowed mother was the "Grandmother Gregory" who shook her poker at Tryon's troops when they entered the Gregory house in 1777.

William D. Gregory, a grandson of Deacon Daniel, married two of the twelve daughters of Colonel George Middlebrook, and was a successful merchant, land owner, and sawmill operator. His son George C. M. Gregory was a Wilton grocer who lived south of the present Town Hall at 232 Danbury Road.

\* Although Jachin probably did not call himself "Jachin II," Hubbard used Roman numerals.





Samuel Keeler II (1682-1763) was among the purchasers of Ridgefield but returned in 1710 to settle in Wilton at Hop Meadow, below the Ridgefield border on Ridgefield Road. He was Wilton's first war veteran, joining the expedition to Port Royal in Queen Anne's War in 1710. Samuel II never joined the Wilton church, but his son Samuel III joined in 1741, about the same time that he built the house still standing at 550 Ridgefield Road.

About thirty years later, Samuel IV built the house at 652 Ridgefield Road. His son, Isaiah Keeler (1790-1874), expanded the house and added land until his farm was one of the largest in Wilton. He was a Wilton selectman for several terms between 1824 and 1841 and was a dominant figure on Bald Hill for many years. He was the father of Fanny, LeGrand, and Emily. LeGrand (1815-1892) had four sons, all of whom attended Wilton Academy: Samuel (1845-1935), Yale 1867, a lawyer in Ridgefield; Edward L. (1847-1896), storekeeper; Robert W. (1853-1933), North Wilton and Wilton Center storekeeper until 1927; and William L. (1860-1929), seven-term Wilton First Selectman and the last Keeler to live on the family farm at 652 Ridgefield Road, which he sold in 1907. He moved his family to Wallingford in 1915, where his daughters Catherine and Caroline died recently at the ages of 100 and 96. R. W.'s elder son Samuel was a real estate and insurance man and his younger son Raymond founded Keeler's Hardware in 1939, which continues to be owned by the family.

The other Keeler homestead at 550 Ridgefield Road passed to Emily Keeler and her husband Isaac Benedict in 1860, and their heirs sold it in 1900. Both Keeler homes on Ridgefield Road were owned by the family for over 150 years. Frank Benedict, grandson of Emily and Isaac, sold 30 acres of his "Big Elm Farm" on Belden Hill Road to the Town of Wilton in 1961 for Miller and Driscoll school sites.

### Lambert Family

Jesse Lambert came from England and settled in Milford in the 1680s. His daughter Elizabeth married Joseph Birchard in 1710 and they were early settlers in the northern lands of Norwalk that became Wilton. Another daughter Sarah married John Dunning in 1712. They came to Wilton soon afterwards, buying land from Joseph Birchard and settling nearby. Jesse's son David (1700-1784) came to Norwalk in 1722 and to Wilton in 1727, when he married and built his home at 150 Danbury Road. He soon became a leader in the community, being appointed taverner, treasurer of the Society, and clerk of the train band. His house was also designated as the posting place for public notices.

David Lambert had three children who lived to maturity: Elizabeth (1728-1770), David II (1740-1815), and Rachel, born in 1744. Elizabeth was the second wife of Deacon Peter Lockwood of Norwalk. Their son Lambert Lockwood was a Revolutionary patriot soldier wounded and captured

### LAMBERT FAMILY - ABRIDGED GENEALOGY

JESSE LAMBERT (MILFORD SETTLER)

SARAH (1694- ) M. 1712 JOHN DUNNING (WILTON PETITION)

JESSE (1688- )

ELIZABETH (1691- ) M. 1710 JOSEPH BIRCHARD (WILTON SETTLER)

DAVID (1700-1784) M. LURANY BILL (WILTON 1727)

ELIZABETH (1728-1770) M. PETER LOCKWOOD

LAMBERT LOCKWOOD

RACHEL (1744- ) M. ELIHU DEFORST

DAVID (1740-1815) (YALE 1761) M. SUSANNAH ROGERS (1752-1829)

ELIZABETH (1771-1837)

DAVID R. (1772-1825)

LURANY (1775-1849) M. MAJOR SAMUEL BELDEN, DIVORCED

HENRY B. (1777-1840)

ESTHER (1780-1814)

SARAH SUSANNAH (1782-1840) M. GEORGE CROOKSHANK

SAMUEL F. (1784-1865) M. ESTHER ROCKWELL

DAVID S. R. (1852-1897)

JOHN JAMES (1787-1848) M. AURINDA BETTS

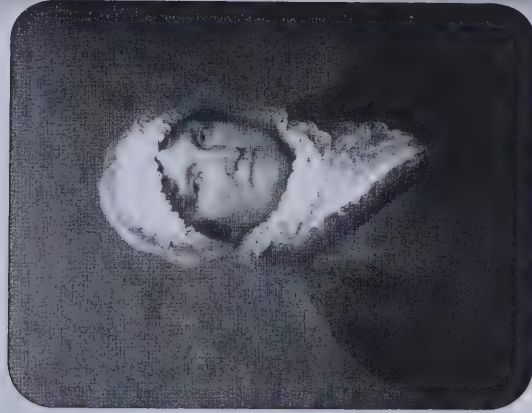
JULIA (1792-1864)

during Tryon's Raid. Their daughter Dorothy (Dolly) Lockwood married Captain Abraham Gregory, son of Ezra and a Wilton militia officer. Rachel Lambert married Captain Elihu DeForest, who served in both the French and Indian and Revolutionary Wars. On the other hand, the Loyalist views held by David Lambert II, probably influenced by his wife, caused him to be removed from his position in charge of the School Fund in 1775.

David Lambert II was the first person from Wilton to graduate from college: Yale 1761. In 1769 he married Susannah Rogers (1752-1829), daughter of the late wealthy Norwalk merchant Nehemiah Rogers and his widow Elizabeth Fitch, niece of former Governor Thomas Fitch. Both David and Susannah came to their marriage with considerable property and they lived in the Lambert house in high style. The family was a power with many social connections and entertained on a generous scale. When Mrs. Elizabeth Fitch Rogers visited her daughter, Susannah Lambert, they drove through the countryside in state, in a fine carriage drawn by four handsomely caparisoned horses and served by a cadre of liverymen. Wilton people would run to their windows when they heard the rumbling of the heavy coach wheels to witness the spectacle.<sup>5</sup> Susannah's sister Esther married Archibald Gracie, builder of the New York City Gracie Mansion, thereby







*The Lamberts were perhaps the only Wilton family wealthy enough to have portraits made before the age of photography. Top: Elizabeth Fitch Rogers, about 1810, and her daughter Susannah Lambert, wife of David Lambert II. Bottom: David Rogers Lambert and Samuel Fitch Lambert sons of David Lambert II*

Nehemiah Rogers II served with the British army during the Revolution and afterwards was a New York City merchant.

David Lambert II was elected to the Society School Committee in 1782 and 1783. After the Revolution, the Lambert and Rogers families spent some time in St. John, New Brunswick, Canada until the hard feelings melted away, then returned to the states. Lambert served as clerk when Wilton citizens met in 1800 and 1801 to prepare a petition for separation from Norwalk. After the separation was accomplished in 1802, David was elected a Lister (Assessor) and later served as a Wilton selectman. He was also an organizer of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in that year and served as clerk and collector for the church.

David II and Susannah had nine children: four sons and five daughters. All four sons, David R., Henry B., Samuel F., and John James, spent their early careers in New York City with Uncle Nehemiah Rogers II in the cotton, hardware, and insurance businesses, with investments in many other ventures. When the Erie Canal was being built in 1823, David R. Lambert invested in the Farmington Canal in Connecticut, a money-losing proposition. Two years later, David R. was killed by a group of sidewalk thugs in an early New York City mugging incident. (Eight men were convicted for the crime.) At the same time, an economic recession put the Lambert companies seriously into debt and two of the brothers, Henry and Samuel F., went to prison for their financial chicanery. Upon their release in 1827, Samuel F. and John James returned to Wilton, where they were active supporters and officers of St. Matthew's. Samuel F. was appointed Wilton postmaster from 1831 to 1839 and again from 1841 to 1844.

Of the five daughters, Lurany in 1818 married the colorful and eccentric Samuel Belden II, Wilton's second Town Clerk. In 1834 Lurany left Belden and returned to the Lambert homestead. Sarah Susannah married a wealthy Canadian merchant, George Crookshank, and moved to Toronto. Their daughter Catherine Crookshank married a Mr. Heward, and the ownership of the Lambert house, along with much of the Lambert furniture, was transferred in 1913 to the Canadian Hewards. The other three daughters, Elizabeth, Esther, and Julia, remained unmarried in the comfortable Lambert home along with Lurany, divorced from her husband.

Samuel F. (1784-1865) remained a bachelor until age sixty-four. He finally married Esther Rockwell, thirty-seven, daughter of the Lambert handyman, Billy Rockwell.\* Their son, David S. R. Lambert, born in 1852, was the last of his name to live in the Lambert house. He was a teacher and maintained a private academy in his home. His wife, Eva Ogden, daughter of Sereno Ogden,

\* Lewis Rockwell, grandson of David S. R. Lambert's cousin Frank Rockwell (1859-1941), donated a number of items from the Lambert house to the Wilton Historical Society between 1956 and 1962.





family still lived in New Canaan. Herbert (1852-1912) married Marianna Jones of Wilton, became a successful lawyer in New York, and maintained a summer home in Wilton. Eva (1854-1919) was an accomplished poet and had many poems published in *St. Nicholas* and *Harper's* magazines under both her name and her married name. She married David S. R. Lambert, the last of the prominent Wilton Lamberts.

David Ogden (1860-1900) was a farmer and substantial landowner in Wilton. He married Aggie Fitch, daughter of Sherman P. Fitch. They lived in the Fillow house at 213 Danbury Road, north of Young's Nurseries, later the home of Charles Orem. Elizabeth (1856-1943) married Dr. Dewing of Brooklyn. After his death she came to Wilton and lived with her widowed sister Eva Lambert until Eva died in 1919. Susan married John Cummings of Goshen, New York.

Hannah Ogden (1857-1942) married Henry Chichester (1839-1911) of Wilton. Henry and Hannah both served as Wilton Town Clerks, Henry for twenty-six years (1880-1891 and 1896-1911) and Hannah for four (1921-1925). Hannah was succeeded in that office by her daughter-in-law, Helen Chichester, wife of Sherwood, who served fifteen years until 1940. In 1877, Henry Chichester built the yellow Victorian house at 237 Danbury Road across from the current Town Hall. The Town Clerk's office was kept in the Chichester house for most of the years between 1880 and 1931, until the current Town Hall opened.

George Ogden (1862-1923) was a Columbia graduate, teacher in Wilton, member of the school board, Wilton Town Clerk for ten years (1911-1921), and a state representative. Like his sister Eva, he was also a poet. His wife, Adele Clerc, was the granddaughter of Laurent Clerc, a deaf/mute associate of Thomas Gallaudet and co-founder in 1817 of the famous American School for the Deaf in Hartford. George inherited the Ogden homestead, which later passed to their son F. Clerc Ogden (called Clerc and pronounced "clare").

At one point while George Ogden was our state representative, he introduced a bill to protect the beautiful wood duck from hunters. Through an inadvertent error by the clerk of the House Journal, the printed bill came out "for the protection of the woodchuck," eliciting an immediate uproar from the newspapers and all of the farmers in the state. One writer said "It does not seem possible that any sane man would think of such a law. If the gentleman had ever lived in the country and suffered the depredations of these little pests, he would think before introducing the bill in question. The state should be made to pay for all damages caused by such idiotic legislation, and the Grangers in Mr. Ogden's district should look after him."

George's son, F. Clerc Ogden (1888-1971), was Wilton Registrar of Voters for forty-five years, from 1915 to 1960, head of the Wilton ration board during World War II, and a creative writer who wrote many of the scripts

for the old minstrel shows, poems for every occasion, and a book of his personal recollections of people and places in the Wilton of his youth. These stories were often published in the Bulletin under the name of the "Original Old Timer." Clerc sold his home to Our Lady of Fatima for a school site in 1959 and retired to Florida. OLF moved the house to the rear of the property and converted it into a residence for the teaching sisters. A bequest in Clerc Ogden's will provided the impetus for Wilton to build its first housing for senior citizens, Ogden House.

### *Olmsted/Olmstead Family*

The Olmstead family has been intertwined with Wilton history since the beginning. Richard Olmsted was a 1651 settler in Norwalk and owner of Home Lot XV. His son, Squire James (1650-c.1731), was a significant landowner in Norwalk and in what is now Wilton. Nathan I (1678-1717), son of Squire James, married Sarah Keeler, daughter of Ralph Keeler II. Sarah died young, leaving young Nathan II, born in 1703. Nathan I, for his second wife, married Mercy Comstock, daughter of Norwalk settler Christopher Comstock, and they had two more sons, Samuel and James III. Nathan Olmsted I died in 1717, leaving three young boys, Nathan II, Samuel, and James.

Grandfather Keeler seems to have looked after young Nathan Olmsted II, giving him land in Wilton at the north end of Drum Hill. He was twenty-three years old when he signed the 1726 parish petition. Nathan II did not remain long in Wilton, leaving in 1739 for Rowayton, and then moving to New Fairfield in 1740.

Squire James probably assisted his daughter-in-law Mercy in raising Samuel (1706-1761) and James III\* (1708-1777) after Nathan I died. He probably also aided both of them in getting started in Wilton, where they founded the Olmsted dynasty here. Both are buried in Sharp Hill Cemetery.

Samuel Olmsted had two sons and a son-in-law in the Revolution. Samuel's son Samuel II served as a Wilton selectman from 1803 to 1816. His grandson Samuel D. built the house at 518 Nod Hill Road in 1795. Samuel D.'s son Lewis was a shirtmaker with 150 employees and the postmaster in North Wilton. Another son, Walter, died of smallpox in 1853. Because many cemeteries would not take smallpox victims, Walter is buried in the yard of his homestead at 596 Nod Hill Road.<sup>7</sup>

James Olmsted III settled in 1729 on the hill that now bears his name. The road over Olmstead Hill was laid out in that year. The house that he built at 236 Olmstead Hill (now 1 Collinswood Road) has been rebuilt but

\*James II was a son of Squire James who died young.





## OLMSTED/OLMSTEAD FAMILY—ABRIDGED GENEALOGY

RICHARD OLMSTED (NORWALK SETTLER)  
 SQUIRE JAMES (1650–c.1731)  
 NATHAN (1678–1717) M. SARAH KEELER  
 NATHAN II (WILTON PETITION, TO ROWAYTON)  
 NATHAN M2. MERCY COMSTOCK  
 SAMUEL (1706–1761)  
 SAMUEL II  
 MOSES  
 SAMUEL DEF. M. RACHEL ST. JOHN  
 LEWIS (SHIRT MANUFACTURER)  
 MOSES DEF.  
 RACHEL O. ARMSTRONG  
 MARY I. COLLINS  
 ISABELLE HOLTVEDT  
 RUTH HORN  
 JOHN  
 PATRICIA SWEENEY  
 JAMES III (1708–1777)  
 JAMES IV (1730–1807)  
 ISAAC  
 AARON M. SARAH ESTHER HAWLEY  
 HAWLEY (PROFESSOR)  
 EDWARD M. MARIAN HYDE  
 JANE M. AUGUSTUS MERWIN  
 TIMOTHY T. MERWIN II  
 ELIZABETH M. JOSIAH GILBERT  
 ALICE  
 MARIAN  
 ALFRED  
 HAWLEY II  
 MINERVA M. WILLIAM A. STURGES  
 MARY M. JAMES DAVENPORT  
 SYLVESTER  
 JOHN S.  
 HAWLEY C.  
 SILAS (GROCER)  
 SILAS (1732– )  
 SARAH (1736– ) M. DAVID DEF. FOREST III  
 NATHAN III (1748–c.1792) M. MARY MIDDLEBROOK  
 ABRAHAM M. RACHEL ST. JOHN (SECOND HUSBAND)  
 JOHN A.  
 EDWARD  
 EMMA  
 AARON II  
 SYLVESTER B.  
 J. RICHARD  
 LAWRENCE  
 CHARLES

stands on the original site and is still occupied by an Olmstead descendant in the twelfth generation, ninth in Wilton.<sup>8</sup> Nine of his sons and grandsons served in the Revolutionary War. James was a deacon in the church. At his death in 1777, his farmlands covered much of Olmstead Hill and Nod Hill. He had five sons, four of whom remained in Wilton, raised big families, and acquired more land. The Olmstead lands once covered about a thousand acres in North Wilton.

Nathan III, a son of James III, married Mary Middlebrook, daughter of Michael, the scion of the Middlebrook family in Wilton. Their sons Abraham (1784–1868) and Aaron II (1790–1859) inherited farms on Olmstead Hill. Abraham was the second husband of Rachel St. John, after whom St. Johns Road is named. Their son John A. Olmstead left the homestead at 236 Olmstead Hill to his son and daughter, Edward and Emma, and at Emma's death in 1933 it passed to a cousin, Mary Isabella Collins. Both St. Johns and Collinswood Roads were developed on Olmstead land.

Aaron II owned 84 acres at 147 Olmstead Hill that passed to his son Sylvester B. (1837–1911) then to Sylvester's son J. Richard Olmstead (1873–1949). Richard sold the house and 50 acres to the Ackerman family in 1942 and built himself a small house across the street (160 Olmstead Hill), where later his son Lawrence lived until his death in 1983. Lawrence's brother Charles lived nearby at 134 Olmstead Hill until his death in 1996. Both Lawrence and Charles were founders of the Volunteer Fire Department in 1928 and active members of Zion's Hill Methodist Church. Charles's granddaughter still lives in Wilton on land that was once her great-grandfather's woodlot.

James IV, eldest son of James III, had ten children, including four sons who remained in Wilton: Isaac, Aaron, Alfred, and John S., all with farms and families on Nod Hill or Olmstead Hill. Isaac (1759–1797) probably lived at 190 Olmstead Hill, as his grandson, Lorenzo D. (1808–1895), owned 35 acres there in the mid-1800s.

Aaron I (1770–1820) was the father of Professor Hawley Olmstead (1793–1868), founder in 1818 of the well-known Wilton Academy. Hawley married Harriet Smith from New Canaan, cousin of Alfred Smith, founder of the Smith family in Wilton and one of the first trustees of the Bald Hill Methodist Church. Their son Edward Olmstead (1824–1898) continued the Academy for forty-three years, from 1855 until his death. Among the children of Edward and his wife Marian were four Wilton residents: Jane and her husband Augustus Merwin were the parents of Timothy Merwin II (1883–1975) and Alice, wife of Wilton builder Charles Eakland; Elizabeth "Lillie" (1856–1950) married dairy farmer Josiah Gilbert and had sons Edward, Thomas, and George; Marian was the wife of William K. J. Hubbell; and Alice (1859–1955) remained unmarried, known to all as Aunt Alice.





American colonies to pay for the war, which had benefitted the colonies by removing the menace of the Indians and French. Among the debts was fulfilling William Pitt's 1758 promise to reimburse the colonies for the expense of raising their troops.

The first fund-raising act passed by Parliament, in March 1764, was the Sugar Act, reinforcing an earlier act and increasing duties on various imports, including molasses, a necessary ingredient of that vital staple, rum. This was followed by the Stamp Tax, announced to be effective in November 1765. This was a pure and direct excise tax, unrelated to imports, and in the colonists' minds, entirely illegal. The principal objection was that Parliament had no right to levy taxes on American colonists who were not represented in Parliament.

Opposition to the taxes was led by the Sons of Liberty, founded in 1765 by Samuel Adams and others in Boston. The organization quickly spread to all of the northern colonies.<sup>6</sup> The name was adapted from a pro-colonial speech in Parliament by Isaac Barré.<sup>7</sup> Demonstrations in Boston soon were repeated in Connecticut, where Stamp Master Jared Ingersoll, brother of Ridgefield minister Jonathan Ingersoll, was burned in effigy in Norwich, Lebanon, and New London. When five hundred Liberty Boys surrounded Mr. Ingersoll in Wethersfield in September 1765 and forced his resignation on pain of physical harm, Governor Thomas Fitch, a resident of Norwalk and a Loyalist, condemned the riots and prosecuted the rioters.

The first official gathering of representatives of the colonies was the Stamp Act Congress, called by New York leaders for October 1765. Nine of the thirteen colonies, including Connecticut, sent delegates. The Congress condemned the tax. The Connecticut Colonial Assembly, in defiance of Governor Fitch, overwhelmingly endorsed the resolutions of this Congress, despite dissenting votes cast by both of the delegates from Norwalk: Thomas Fitch Jr., son of the governor, and Joseph Platt. Many towns, including Fairfield, demonstrated against the Stamp Act. However, at a special Town Meeting on November 12, 1765, Norwalk expressed its continued loyalty to the king and disapproval of the riots. The sentiments in Wilton Parish were already less Loyalist than in old Norwalk but it would be nine more years before Norwalk would vote to support the Patriot cause.

It became clear that Governor Fitch would not be reelected. The Connecticut Sons of Liberty called a meeting in Hartford in March 1766 and agreed upon acceptable candidates. With their overwhelming strength in New London and Windham counties, they produced a political revolution, and the assembly elected William Pitkin of Hartford governor. Fitch was only the second Connecticut governor ousted against his will. (His predecessor, Roger Wolcott, was the first.) Significantly, Colonel Jonathan Trumbull of Lebanon, a supporter of the Patriot cause, was elected lieutenant governor. Three years later when Pitkin died, Trumbull was elected governor and served nearly fif-

teen years, all through the Revolutionary War, until 1784. Connecticut was the only state with a popularly elected Patriot governor throughout the war.

Meanwhile, British merchants suffering from loss of trade with the colonies fanned popular opposition to the Stamp Act, and after a dramatic and effective appearance by Benjamin Franklin before Parliament in February 1766, Parliament repealed the act. A year later the Townshend Acts imposed duties on American importation of many British products. In answer to defiance by the colonies, the British sent 4,000 regular army soldiers into Boston, a city of 16,000 people.

Tensions mounted until finally on the night of March 5, 1770 a waterfront mob taunted a detachment of nine English soldiers with sticks and snowballs to the point where a riot ensued; the troops opened fire and five Americans died in what became known all over the colonies as the Boston Massacre. Parliament retreated, withdrawing the British troops and repealing all of the Townshend duties except for a tax on tea so small that they thought even Boston might swallow it. They miscalculated.

In December 1773, Bostonians disguised as Indians dumped three shiploads of tea into the harbor. In retaliation, Parliament passed the Coercive Laws, or Intolerable Acts, suspending the Massachusetts Assembly, placing them directly under control of the Crown, and closing the port of Boston. Furthermore, the 4,000 despised British troops were sent back to Boston, along with the right of the army to demand food and shelter from the colonists. The road to revolution was now short.

## *Patriots and Tories*

The immediate response in America was a widespread call for a meeting of colonial leaders. The First Continental Congress was summoned to Philadelphia in September 1774. There, fifty-six men representing every colony but Georgia adopted a resolution opposing the Coercive Acts, created an association to boycott British goods, passed ten resolutions enumerating the rights of the colonies, and agreed to meet again in May 1775 if their grievances had not been addressed.

In Connecticut, the militia began to drill with renewed energy. Towns began to line up with either the Patriots or the Loyalists, who came to be called Tories. Norwalk, with the urging of most of the residents of Wilton Parish, was one of the first in Fairfield County to vote to support the Patriots, on December 5, 1774. Fairfield followed on December 29.

But in January 1775, a Ridgefield Town Meeting voted allegiance to King George. Redding, Newtown, and New Milford all did likewise in February. Redding had 142 members of a Loyalist association, while in Wilton the number was never more than two score. A Convention of Patriots of Fairfield County met in Fairfield and encouraged towns to withhold





"co force and connection from the inhabitants of Ridgefield and Newtown. All except Ridgefield and Newtown reversed their positions within a few months and voted support for the Patriot cause, but Ridgefield citizens held out until December 17, 1775, when they finally voted "to defend the rights and liberties of ye United American Colonies."<sup>9</sup> Newtown continued to be split by infighting and bitter controversy until 1778. Strong Tory factions remained in several Fairfield County towns throughout the war. It was a difficult time, with neighbor against neighbor, and in at least two Wilton cases, brother against brother.

The ranking Patriot leader in Wilton, Matthew Mead, had been elected captain of the Train Band in 1773, greatly disappointing Clapp Raymond, who had served as lieutenant for ten years and expected to receive this promotion. Raymond refused to obey Mead's orders or to do his duty as lieutenant until finally he was suspended for insubordination and rebuked by the General Assembly in May 1775, after which he appeared to accept his role.

Captain Mead had served in the French and Indian War and later served with distinction in the Revolution, attaining the rank of colonel. He was the only colonel and the most eminent Revolutionary officer from the Norwalk/Wilton area. In a time when men typically served for three months, Mead served continuously for five years from 1775 to 1780, leaving at that time to become Norwalk's representative in the Connecticut General Assembly. He later became a leader in Wilton's separation from Norwalk. Mead was born in 1735 in a house, rebuilt but still standing on its original site on Ridgefield Road at the corner of DeForest. When he died in 1816 he was buried nearby in the old Comstock Cemetery, one of seven Revolutionary veterans there.

Samuel Comstock succeeded Mead in 1775 as captain of the Wilton Train Band and continued as captain of a Connecticut Militia company, then as a company commander in the 5th Connecticut Regiment of the Continental Army. Captain Comstock was in the battles of White Plains, Germantown, Fort Mifflin, Monmouth, and Yorktown, and with the army in the difficult winter at Valley Forge. His active service spanned seven years, from 1776 to the peace treaty of 1783. He was promoted to major at his retirement in 1783 and was one of the leaders in Wilton after the war.

Another notable Patriot leader in Wilton was Ezra Gregory, elected a selectman in Norwalk, then assigned "keeper of the stores" (military supplies) at Danbury. He died at age fifty at his post in November 1776, a year before Tryon's Raid. One wonders if Tryon's Raid would have had a different outcome if Ezra Gregory had lived. He had four sons who served in the war: Abraham, Ezra, Matthew, and Moses.

Daniel Betts III, brother of Ezra Gregory's wife Hannah, had served in the French and Indian War and represented the Wilton Patriots in the legislature in 1776. During the Revolutionary War, he was a member of the

Wilton Committee of Inspection responsible for the conduct of military affairs in the town.

Clapp Raymond served in 1775 as Society Clerk and a member of the Committee of Inspection. He redeemed himself within the Wilton militia and in 1777 he and Nathan Gilbert both became captains. Captain Raymond was elected to the legislature in 1778 and 1779 and was a justice of the peace after the war. Other members of the Committee of Inspection were Blackleach Jessup, who helped supply clothing to the army in 1778; Timothy Fitch, son of the ex-governor and a resident on Chestnut Hill; and Matthew Marvin V, keeper of the tavern in Pimpewaug.

Marvin received a tavern license in 1762 for his house at 405 Danbury Road, which operated continuously for thirty years, longer than any other Wilton tavern. During the Revolution, it was a favorite stopping place for teamsters and generals alike. Joseph Joslin, a young teamster hauling supplies to Danbury for the Continental Army, kept a diary telling of several pleasant visits there in 1777, during the month before Tryon's Raid.<sup>10</sup> After the same General Tryon burned Norwalk two years later, Patriot General Samuel H. Parsons spent the nights of July 11 and 12, 1779 at Marvin Tavern, and from there wrote two reports to General Washington, headed "Wilton."<sup>11</sup>

Not everyone in Wilton shared the intense patriotism of these men. There were many who, although unhappy with the recent taxes and other activities of the British, were still reluctant to break free from the British Empire, which had sheltered the American colonies under its wing for nearly 170 years, since the first settlement at Jamestown. There were also strong economic and cultural ties. The more conservative Americans, including many Church of England members, significant landowners, and merchants with long-established businesses, favored staying with the British and warned of the consequences of treason, should the war be lost.

Among those were merchants David Lambert Jr. and Samuel Belden. Both were members of St. Paul's Anglican Church in Norwalk as well as officers in the Wilton Society.\* The Wilton Society meeting of December 11, 1775 removed Lambert and Samuel Fitch Jr. from the care of the School Fund for their Loyalist views. Samuel Belden, captain of the Wilton Troop of Horse in May 1776, was removed and court-martialed when he failed to mobilize his unit promptly when ordered to do so in June 1776. Dr. Azor Betts, son of Wilton taverner and original parish petition signer Nathan Betts, was arrested as a Tory in New York City by the Sons of Liberty. A number of other prominent Wilton residents were Tories, including Nathan Gregory, Hezekiah and John Belden III (brothers of Captain Samuel),

\* It was possible for Episcopalians (known as Anglicans before the Revolution) and members of other denominations to participate in secular Society affairs.







*Job Burlock lived in the oldest (left) section of this house. A Tory, his house was confiscated during the Revolution and he fled to Long Island. After the war, he returned and was shot dead on his doorstep. Later occupants of this house included Dr. David Willard, Judge George Davenport, and Charles Dana.*

John and Nathan Fitch, Hezekiah and Abraham Whitney, Thomas Hanford, and others. Many families were split in allegiance, with strong passionate feelings on both sides, including the Gregorys, DeForests, Bettses, Fitches, and Beldens. Most of the Tories were content to sit back and not get involved in the events that followed.

In April 1781, the state legislature passed an act requiring the registration of "inimical persons" with the Town Clerk in each town. From Wilton, David Lambert Jr., Hezekiah and John Belden III, and Nathan Fitch were identified in this category.

Property was confiscated from Tories who were considered serious threats to aid, assist, or spy for the British. The house of Job Burlock and his son Thomas, at 19 Station Road, was the only property seized in Wilton. The Burlocks, and many other British sympathizers, went to Long Island for the duration of the war, trading places with many Patriots who came from Long Island to Connecticut. After the war, in 1783, Job returned to Wilton and was shot dead on his doorstep.<sup>12</sup> No one was ever charged. His widow went to Nova Scotia. Over the years, his house has been enlarged, rebuilt, and occupied by several notable Wiltonians including Dr. David Willard, Judge George Davenport, and Charles Dana. It is now owned by the Town of Wilton.

The most avid of the British supporters joined the British army. The "Prince of Wales Regiment" was made up entirely of Americans who had volunteered to fight against their countrymen. From Wilton, it included

Captain Ephraim DeForest and Jared Betts.\* Captain Elihu DeForest, brother of Ephraim, was in the Patriot army. Jared Betts served as a guide for General Tryon on his way to raid Danbury in April 1777. His brother, Nathan Betts IV, a Patriot soldier, was killed in the Battle of Ridgefield on Tryon's return trip from Danbury.<sup>13</sup> The Revolution was truly America's first civil war.

## Wilton in the Revolution

As far as is known, no Wilton men were at Lexington and Concord (April 18, 1775), Ticonderoga (May 10, 1775), or Bunker Hill (June 17, 1775), but they were in every major battle afterwards. Wilton's Matthew Mead commanded the first company of men raised in Norwalk at the outset of the war. On May 1, 1775, he was commissioned as captain in command of the 5th or Norwalk Company of the 5th Connecticut Regiment, composed primarily of Fairfield County men. The early militia regiments from Connecticut and other New England states were later transferred to the Continental Army.

On the same day that Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold seized Ticonderoga, May 10, the Second Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia. There were still debates between reconciliation and independence, but by June 14 Congress voted to raise and pay a Continental Army, and a day later, at the suggestion of John Adams, chose George Washington to lead it. Perhaps in anticipation, Washington had been wearing his military uniform to the meetings. A formal army organization was necessary in order to ensure discipline, reliability, and continuity of service. The militia, sometimes known as "summer soldiers," were often unpredictable, being farmers first and soldiers second; at harvest time it was always difficult to rally the troops.

In Captain Mead's company of a hundred men, there were thirty-one from Wilton, on an eight-month tour of duty.<sup>14</sup> They were ordered to join the Canadian campaign under Brigadier General Richard Montgomery. On September 6, at the siege of St. Johns (now St. Jean sur Richelieu) near Montreal, Captain Mead was wounded in his side by a bullet that struck a silver dollar in his pocket, probably saving his life. Seth Chase, in Mead's company, was not so fortunate, becoming Wilton's first fatality in the Revolution on October 12. Another Wilton soldier, sixteen-year-old Ambrose Chard, died two weeks later.

\* Ephraim, born in Wilton and a French and Indian War veteran, had moved to Redding by the time of the Revolution.

<sup>14</sup> Enlistment in the Continental Line was later changed to three years, while service in the state militia was never more than a few weeks at a time. Men frequently served in several different units over the course of the war.





After the British captured Montreal on November 2, Montgomery went on to capture Quebec on November 13 and then moved down the St. Lawrence to join Benedict Arnold at Quebec. Arnold, a New London, Connecticut native and a daring and reckless but effective and charismatic leader, marched his men through the cold and wet wilderness of northern Maine, arriving at Quebec with his army half-starved and half-frozen. In the ensuing assault on December 31, General Montgomery was killed. The Americans were hoping to have the help of the French Canadians in the war against England; however, they were content with British rule and wanted no part of the war. In the spring of 1776 when British reinforcements arrived, the Americans were forced to give up the Canadian campaign, retreating south through the Champlain Valley.

George Washington arrived outside of Boston on July 2, 1775 to take command of his ragged army and organize a siege of the city, at that time held by the British. Nine men from Wilton were in the Connecticut regiments posted there from September to December 1775, including Nathan Gilbert, Ezra Gregory II, Elias Gregory, and Salmon Hubbell. The ultimate success of this siege was due to the remarkable achievement of General Henry Knox in transporting the heavy artillery from Ticonderoga to Boston in the dead of winter. He constructed forty-three wooden sledges, pulled by eighty yoke of oxen, to drag the guns, some weighing as much as a ton each, three hundred miles across the frozen wilderness. British General William Howe was finally forced to evacuate Boston in March 1776.

In January 1776, Wilton militiamen on three-month duty were sent to assist in the fortification of New York, under the command of Connecticut's colorful Major General Israel Putnam, already famous for his command at Bunker Hill: "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes!" In Captain Mead's very young company were twenty-eight men from Wilton, only four of whom had served the previous year. Some of Mead's men were David Dunning, 22, Matthew Gregory Jr., 18, Salmon Hubbell, 21, Zadock Hubbell, 19, Justus Keeler, 25, Isaiah Keeler, 24, Aaron Keeler, 16, Lambert Lockwood, 18, Jonathan Middlebrook, 21, and Isaac Olmsted, 16.

### *King George's Statue*

When the British Navy blockaded the American coast, the Continental Congress in June 1776 considered a resolution dissolving allegiance to the British crown, but six of the thirteen colonies were not yet ready. By July 4, the Declaration, eloquently drafted by Thomas Jefferson, was unanimously accepted. In the resulting celebration when the Declaration was read in New York City on July 9, the Sons of Liberty pulled down a large equestrian statue of King George III, leading to a series of events that would reverberate in Wilton for nearly two hundred years. Despite the strong patriotism of the vast majority of Wilton residents, the most significant

event that occurred in Wilton was probably the work of Tories, not Patriots.

The story of King George's statue begins in 1770, when it was erected in New York City along with a statue of William Pitt. William Pitt was a hero in this country, having led the English and Americans to victory in the French and Indian War opening the American West. On the other hand, King George III was a young and headstrong monarch who came to the throne in 1760 determined to control Parliament. He soon forced Pitt from power. Although the colonists at first pledged George III their loyalty, they soon lost their enthusiasm for the king.<sup>15</sup> Both statues were crafted by Joseph Wilton (1722-1803), a prominent sculptor in London. The King George statue was cast in lead and gilded, shipped to America, and erected at Bowling Green near the tip of Manhattan on August 21, 1770. The king was depicted on horseback, in Roman garb, after the style of the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius in Rome. The statue was massive, estimated at 4,000 pounds, and quickly became as unpopular as the king himself. In 1773 an anti-graffiti, anti-desecration law had to be enacted to discourage vandalism.

After the early battles of the Revolution, the Americans began to covet the 4,000 pounds of lead towering above them for much-needed bullets. On the night of July 9, 1776, when the Declaration of Independence was



*Artist's conception of lead statue of King George III being pulled down in 1776. On its way to Litchfield, the statue traveled through Wilton, where several pieces disappeared into Wilton swamps, not to be discovered until years later.*





receive and first read in New York City, the statue met its demise. In a burst of patriotic fervor, a number of soldiers, sailors, and citizens succeeded in pulling it down. They cut it into pieces of manageable size and shipped it to Norwalk, from whence it was to be carted to Litchfield, the home of General (later Governor) Oliver Wolcott, and a safe place to convert it into bullets.\*

The Sons of Liberty claimed responsibility for the act. They were led either by Colonel Peter Cortenius or by Isaac Sears, both of whom took credit for it. Years later, in 1845, Captain Oliver Brown of Wellsburg, Virginia (now West Virginia) said that he was in command of the soldiers and sailors at the destruction of the statue. He said there were forty of them; on the first attempt the ropes broke, but on the second they were successful.<sup>16</sup>

George Washington, in his orderly book on July 10 expressed his disapproval of this sort of mob action and his hope that in the future the military would leave this kind of work "to the proper authorities."<sup>17</sup> Ebenezer Hazard, in a letter of July 12, 1776 to General Gates, said, "The King's statue has been pulled down to make musket balls of, so that his troops will probably have melted majesty fired at them."

In the *New Hampshire Gazette* of July 20, 1776, a letter from a New Yorker stated, "The equestrian statue of George III, raised with Tory pride and folly in 1770, was by the Sons of Freedom laid prostrate in the dust, the just desert of an ungrateful tyrant. The lead from the monument is to be run into bullets, to assimilate with the brains of our infatuated adversaries, who to gain a peppercorn (the right of taxation) have lost an empire."<sup>18</sup>

The head of the king was kept aside, to be impaled upon a stake, but by morning it had disappeared. Somehow, Loyalists smuggled it to England, where it showed up a year later in the home of Lady Townshend (widow of the author of the hated Townshend Acts) and was seen there by Thomas Hutchinson,<sup>†</sup> who noted it in his diary. It has not been seen since.

Meanwhile, the rest of the statue reached the dock in Norwalk and was loaded onto oxcarts under the charge of Henry Chichester of Wilton. When the drivers reached Wilton, they stopped overnight at Clapp Raymond's tavern and continued northward the next day. No one noticed then, but several hundred pounds of valuable lead had disappeared from the carts by the next morning.

At Litchfield, General Oliver Wolcott erected a shed in his orchard and supervised a group of family members and neighbors in casting 42,088 bullets. This count was meticulously recorded in a document that has survived. General Wolcott's young son Frederick was credited with casting 936 bul-

\* In 1777, as the lead shortage continued, the selectmen of all towns in Connecticut were ordered under penalty of law to collect all lead, even from leaded windows.

<sup>†</sup> Fifth-generation descendant of Anne Hutchinson, he was an American native and a Loyalist, appointed royal governor of Massachusetts, 1771-74, after which he fled to England.

lets. Many years later, Judge Frederick Wolcott recalled details of the event for Rev. George Woodruff's *History of Litchfield*, published in 1845: "My father chopped it up with his ax and the girls had a frolic in running it into bullets." Again, no one noticed that a statue of 4,000 pounds, at twenty bullets to the pound, should have yielded almost twice as many bullets as the 42,088 produced. However, Henry Chichester made note of the loss in a letter kept by his family until it was destroyed in a fire in 1830.

This might have been the end of this story, but it is not. Fifty years after the war pieces of the long lost lead began showing up in Wilton. The most recent discovery was in 1972, and by all calculations, there is still more to be found.

About 1822, young LeGrand Sturges,<sup>19</sup> working for William Comstock whose father had owned the Clapp Raymond tavern from 1799-1814, was digging in the Comstock field on the hill across the street, near a pond now on the rear of the Crowne Pond property (hence the name, at 260 Danbury Road), and came upon a seventy-five pound piece of lead in the shape of a saddle. It was identified by an aged veteran as a part of the King George statue. The Comstocks sold it to a New York City resident who sold it to Riley's Fifth Ward Museum Hotel in NYC. After Riley's death in 1864, it disappeared.

Also in the 1820s a piece of the lead coat skirt was found by Moses DeForest Olmstead under the milkroom on the property of his aunt Abigail Sloan, a half mile up the road.\* Aunt Nabby said that her late husband David (known to be a Tory) had taken some pieces in 1776 and hidden them.<sup>20</sup> This piece was shown by Moses DeForest Olmstead in 1829 and has not been seen since.

Exactly how those pieces got into those hiding places will probably never be known. The destruction of the statue with the intent to melt it down for bullets was widely known throughout the area, and it is likely that David Sloan and other local Tories determined to interfere with these plans. Another Loyalist neighbor of Captain Raymond's tavern was Samuel Belden, whose store was across the street to the north.

Three more pieces were found before 1830, probably on the Sloan property: the left arm, a part of the foreleg, and the shoulder of the royal cloak, totaling sixty-five pounds. According to Wilton history compiler David H. Van Hoosier, Samuel F. Lambert purchased these in 1837 from the Sloans. Mr. Lambert wrote of this in 1847 but was unclear as to the location of the discovery. The left arm was given to his brother-in-law Mr. Crookshank of Canada and since lost. The other two pieces remained in Wilton for many years but have now settled in museums. The shoulder passed through several Lambert relatives, ending with Clerc Ogden, nephew of Eva Ogden

\* The Sloan house stood near the swamp south of 49 Old Danbury Road.





Lambert, who gave it to the Connecticut State Library in 1960. The foreleg was given by Sherwood Chichester, another nephew of Eva Lambert, to his goddaughter, Helen Weitzel Chapman, who in 2001 donated it to the New York Historical Society.

The Wilton Historical Society owns a small piece of the gilded royal cloak, said to have come from the Crowne Pond Swamp. Previously owned by Dr. Andrew Gorham (1851–1908), his widow Deborah (1855–1937) gave it to John Davenport (1910–1991), who in turn gave it to the Historical Society in 1965.

The most notable find to date was in March 1871, by Peter Coley, who by then lived on the Sloan place. As reported in the *Norwalk Gazette*, he plowed up some two hundred pounds of tail, flank, and saddle, “evidently part of an old statue of a horse.”<sup>21</sup> In 1877 he sold these pieces to the New York Historical Society for \$100.

Over a hundred years lapsed before the next find. Wilton resident Lou Miller had the advantage of a modern metal detector and in 1972 discovered a twenty-pound piece in the Crowne Pond swamp, unfortunately without permission of the property owners to search on their land. He sold the piece to the Museum of the City of New York for \$5,500 and then discovered that he had sold something that he did not own. The property owners sued and won after a six-year court fight, then sold it to the museum for the same price.

The scorecard currently stands at 2,100 pounds made into bullets, about fifty pounds in the head that went to London, 420 pounds found in Wilton, and about 1,400 pounds still unaccounted for, as of January 2004. Some could have been found and scrapped years ago, but more could still await discovery under Wilton soil.

## *The War Moves to New York*

In mid-1776, the British had determined to capture New York and by taking the Hudson River and Lake Champlain, divide New England from the rest of the colonies. General Howe, who had been driven out of Boston in March, set up camp on Staten Island. In August, he forced Washington’s army to evacuate Long Island and retreat to Manhattan. The Wilton Train Band, now the 7th Company of the 9th Connecticut Militia Regiment, led by Captain Samuel Comstock, participated in the Long Island and New York battles. Among the seventy men serving in Comstock’s company from Wilton were Lieutenant Seth Abbott, Ensign Samuel Olmsted, Sergeant Ezekiel Hawley, Sergeant (later Captain) Daniel Hurlbutt, Sergeant Azor Belden, and Comstock’s brother B. Strong. Major Matthew Mead and twenty-one more Wilton men with the State Brigade also served in New York.<sup>22</sup>

General Washington also lost a battle at Harlem Heights in September and fought to a draw at White Plains in October. At Harlem Heights, two

Wilton men lost their lives: Joseph Trowbridge and Sergeant Ezekiel Hawley. Of all the Wilton soldiers who died during the Revolutionary War, the only one known to be buried in Wilton is Ezekiel Hawley. His body was brought home and is buried in Sharp Hill Cemetery, one of eighteen Revolutionary veterans there.

When Ezekiel Hawley’s daughter, born six months after his death, grew up and married an Olmstead, she named her son Hawley Olmstead. Hawley Olmstead graduated from Yale in 1816, at a time when very few children attended school beyond age twelve. He returned to found the Wilton Academy, a private school that educated hundreds of youth over many years. Olmstead’s great-grandson was Timothy Merwin (1883–1975), a grand Wilton gentleman whom many remember and whose land is now Merwin Meadows. Ezekiel Hawley, a typical Wilton soldier in the Revolution, died fighting for independence, and had no way of knowing that he would leave this enduring legacy.

After the loss of Long Island and New York on September 15, 1776, many Tories in Fairfield County sought to join the King’s troops on Long Island. Later that month, Stephen Hoyt of Norwalk and Stephen Jarvis of Danbury recruited a party of seventy Loyalists from the Danbury area, brought them through Wilton, stopping at the home of Job Burlock, and transported them across Long Island Sound.<sup>23</sup> One month later, the Norwalk selectmen arrested local Loyalist leaders, including Job Burlock and Stephen Keeler of Bald Hill, and escorted them to jail in Coventry, Connecticut. Early in 1777, having signed a declaration of the justice of the American cause, they were released, and promptly fled to Long Island.

David Hendricks of Major Mead’s unit from Wilton was wounded in the Battle of White Plains in October 1776, taken prisoner by the Hessians, carried to New York, and held until the spring of 1777. Thomas Cole was also said to have become ill after the battle. Hearing the news, his mother, Sarah, rode thirty-five miles on horseback and nursed him back to health, also tending many other sick soldiers in the camp.<sup>24</sup> Thomas recovered and later was one of the teamsters on the Hudson River chain. He lived until 1830 and is buried in Hillside Cemetery, one of eighteen Revolutionary veterans there. Today, his gravestone is sheltered under a large boxwood shrub.

Eight Wilton men were among the 3,000 Continental army troops captured at Fort Washington at the northern tip of Manhattan on November 16, 1776: Sergeant David Bennett, Nathan Bennett, James Hoyt, John Hurlbutt, Lemuel Olmsted, John Truesdale, Enoch Tuttle, and William Waterbury. Hoyt died in prison the next year and Hurlbutt died of small-

\* Another traditional account has Thomas’s wife Mary rescuing him in New Jersey and bringing him home to Wilton.





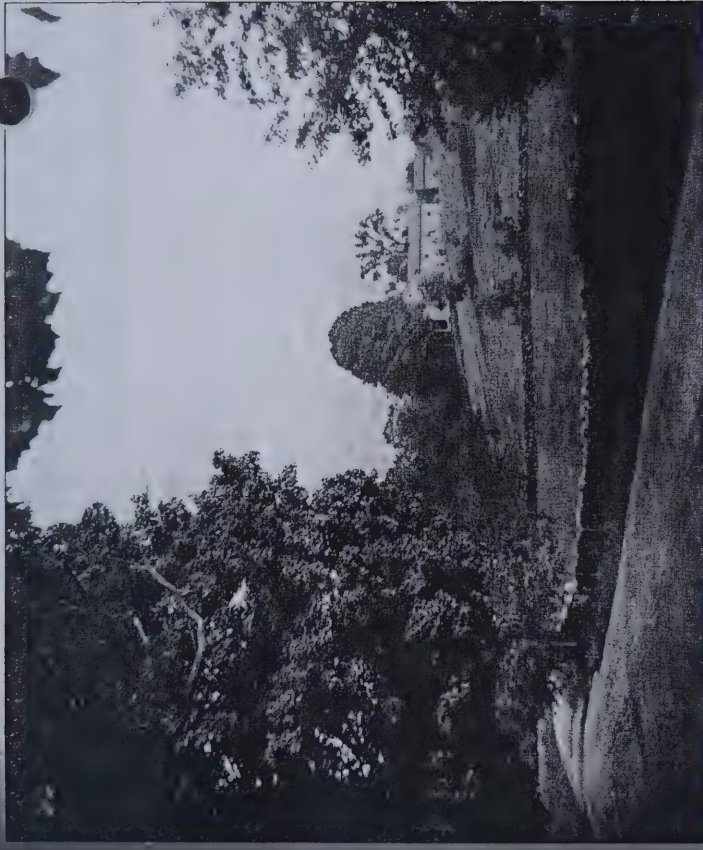
Militia. He was joined by Militia Brigadier General Gold Selleck Silliman of Fairfield and Continental Army General Benedict Arnold, one of the most perplexing figures of the American Revolution. Arnold, always eager for a fight, mounted his horse in New Haven and rode to meet Generals Wooster and Silliman in Redding.

They divided their forces, totaling about six hundred men almost all from the Connecticut Militia, and bravely marched westward across country to intercept Tryon's 1,800 men at Ridgefield. Wooster reached him first and was mortally wounded in a skirmish on North Salem Road. Joseph Jessup and Thaddeus Sterling of Wilton stated in their pension requests that they were nearby when Wooster fell. A barricade was set up by Arnold and Silliman on North Main Street where the main Battle of Ridgefield took place on April 27. During the short but furious battle, General Arnold was nearly captured when his horse was struck by nine bullets and killed. This event was witnessed by Jesse Nichols of Wilton. The Americans were outnumbered by three to one and Tryon prevailed.<sup>30</sup>

The Wilton militia, now led by Lieutenant Seth Abbott, were participants in the stand at Ridgefield. Nathan Betts IV was killed and two were wounded: John Waterbury Jr. and Theophilus Mead, who was wounded by a musket ball in the hip. James Olmsted V and Jacob Patchen were taken prisoner but escaped. Other Wilton militiamen known to be in the battle included Captain Azor Belden, Ensign Samuel Olmsted, David Dunning, Nathan Gilbert, Matthew and Ezra Gregory, Matthew Hanford, Alvin Hyatt, Uriah Keeler, Jesse Olmsted, and Moses Scott. Elihu DeForest, a Wilton native, served as a captain of the Ridgebury militia.

After camping for the night, the British passed quickly through Wilton on April 28, coming south on Ridgefield Road. During this march, the only Wilton citizen to be arrested was Benjamin Keeler of Bald Hill (742 Ridgefield Road), probably for firing upon the British. Benjamin was an Episcopalian and a Patriot, an atypical combination. Samuel Keeler IV (652 Ridgefield Road) suffered the loss of several cows, carried off by the British. When all loss claims were finally recorded by the state government fifteen years later, Samuel claimed a loss value of £30 15s. The next stop was the home of Captain Samuel Comstock at 433 Ridgefield Road, occupied by his wife Mercy. She set her table with tempting food and wine, buried her silver, and hid herself on the hill behind the house. When the British arrived, they partook of the feast and left the house undisturbed.

At Thaddeus Sterling's house (384 Ridgefield Road), they entered and destroyed a large brass kettle. Samuel Middlebrook of Middlebrook Farm fled from his house (274 Ridgefield Road) with his wife and children, but the British entered, broke a large mirror and drained a hogshhead of rum. His claim was £14 9s. 11d. At the intersection of Ridgefield Road with Belden Hill and Mill Road, the troops entered the house of Daniel Gregory (11 Belden Hill Road) and were greeted by Daniel's aged mother who



*Daniel Gregory's house at 11 Belden Hill as it would have appeared to General Tryon's troops in April 1777 coming down Ridgefield Road after the Danbury Raid and the Battle of Ridgefield. When they entered the house, Daniel's aged mother shook a poker at the British.*

shook a poker at them "to show which side I am on."<sup>31</sup> All six houses exist today on Ridgefield Road, designated a state scenic road in 1996.

Having been warned of a possible ambush by militia units on the main road (now Old Ridgefield Road through Wilton Center), the British detoured down Mill Road, which then crossed the valley north of Merwin Meadows and joined (Old) Danbury Road at the Burlock (now Dana) house. At the bridge over Norwalk River, they found and destroyed 100 barrels of rum, several chests of arms, many cartridges (bullets and powder wrapped in paper), 300 tents, and the forge and bellows of Captain Clapp Raymond, a blacksmith. All of this had been hidden there for safekeeping as the Americans did not expect the British to take this route. Upon reaching Samuel Belden's store, the troops began to pillage it but stopped when

<sup>31</sup> A hundred years later, Rev. John Gaylord Davenport wrote a poem "Grandmother Gregory" commemorating the event. (Hubbard "Wilton Village," vol. 1, part 2, copy 2, p. 453.)





Wilton resident and our last surviving Revolutionary veteran when he died at 101 in 1855.

## Saratoga

The bright spot for the Americans in the fall of 1777, which became the turning point of the war, was the surrender of Burgoyne's entire army at Saratoga to General Horatio Gates on October 17. Gates's success was largely due to the heroics of his insubordinate General Benedict Arnold in battles at Freeman's Farm and Bemis Point. Several Wilton militiamen served here, including Abraham and Uriah Gregory, Daniel Betts, and Thaddeus Sterling. Eight British generals, 300 other officers, and over 5,400 troops fell into the hands of the Americans, along with 27 large guns, over 5,000 small arms, and other valuable military equipment. The British plan to cut the colonies in two was foiled. Fifty-five men in the Wilton Train Band under Captain Nathan Gilbert played a small role in the defense of Fishkill while the major battles were taking place farther north.<sup>34</sup>

When the news of Saratoga reached France, the French were elated. Most of them were itching to avenge the defeats of the Seven Years War. Benjamin Franklin had been sent to France by Congress in 1776, where he had been successful in securing a constant supply of gunpowder and other necessary items. He continued to negotiate for a French military alliance, and the Saratoga victory sealed the deal. King Louis XVI immediately resolved to help the Americans, and the war became another world war. By April 1778, a French fleet of sixteen ships carrying 4,000 soldiers was on its way to America. Spain seized the opportunity to declare war on England a year later, hoping to recover Florida and Gibraltar. The Peace of Paris awarded Florida to Spain in 1783 but Gibraltar, captured by the British in 1704, remains a thorn in the Spanish side.

## Hudson River Chain

Five Wilton men played a part in the installation of a chain across the Hudson River in 1778 to block the passage of British ships. The Americans had first placed a chain across the river at Fort Montgomery on the west bank north of Peekskill in November 1776.<sup>35</sup> This chain proved too weak to withstand the currents and broke almost immediately. A second chain was installed at the same place in July 1777. Three months later, in early October, as the British continued their efforts to link New York to Burgoyne's army at Saratoga, they bypassed the chain by land and captured both Fort Montgomery and Fort Clinton, as well as Fort Constitution six miles to the north, across from West Point. General William Tryon, whose military specialty seems to have been to burn and destroy, was then sent on October 8

the Hudson.<sup>36</sup> Despite these actions, British efforts to reinforce General Burgoyne at Saratoga failed.

On November 18, after the fall of Saratoga, Tryon burned the houses nearby in Phillips Manor, an event marked by such barbarity that Connecticut Militia General Samuel H. Parsons wrote directly to General Tryon as well as to the Continental Congress expressing his outrage. The insensitive General Tryon replied that he wished that he could burn every Patriot house. Clearly, Tryon was a hard-liner and one of the true villains of the Revolution. Retaliation came soon afterwards from the Phillips Manor neighbors, who burned the estate of Loyalist Oliver DeLancey, turning his wife and children out barefooted into the cold.<sup>37</sup>

Over a period of several months, a new and stronger chain was forged at Sterling Iron Works in the Ramapo Mountains to be installed across the Hudson at a new location between Fort Constitution and West Point. Known as "General Washington's Watch Chain," it consisted of 750 links each two feet long and weighing about 130 pounds. Over 120 iron workers were exempted from military service during the construction, almost half of whom were engaged in felling trees for the charcoal required in the iron-making process. Each day's operation of the furnace required an acre of forest. The military teamsters who transported nearly fifty tons of iron chain links included Captain Azor Belden, Daniel Birchard, Thomas Cole, Daniel Hurlbutt, and Samuel Stuart from Wilton. In April 1778, the chain was strung 1,500 feet across the river between cannon batteries on both shores and supported by forty huge log rafts. It proved to be so effective in blocking the Hudson River that it was never challenged by a British ship and contributed to the British decision to take the war to the South, where the Patriots ultimately triumphed.

## 1778

General Clinton's British army abandoned Philadelphia on June 18 and headed back to defend New York against a possible invasion. He was pursued across New Jersey by a newly proud and vigorous Continental Army. During the hard Valley Forge winter just ended, a former Prussian officer, Friedrich von Steuben, had volunteered to train and drill the straggly army with remarkable results in both discipline and morale. At Monmouth, on June 28, a sweltering day, a hot battle ensued. Both sides lost almost as many men to sunstroke as gunfire. The British also lost about six hundred to desertion. Although it ended in a draw, Washington's troops had shown their ability to stand up against the British in an open field. Captain Samuel Comstock, Sergeant Matthew Gregory, and about fifty Wilton Continental Army troops saw action there. Nathan Thomas of Wilton was killed, and Lieutenant Salmon Hubbell, Nathan Jackson, Azor Patchen, and Nathaniel





In the post-Revolutionary period, Rev. David Belden (Yale 1785), and son of Azor, was one of the local Episcopal leaders. He became rector of Christ Church in Redding in 1785 and of St. Stephen's in Ridgefield in 1788 and occasionally officiated at St. Mark's in New Canaan. As their numbers in Wilton increased in the 1790s, Rev. George Ogilvie of St. Paul's preached to his Wilton flock in the Pimpewaug schoolhouse once every eight Sundays.

Methodism was the last of the dissenting (from Congregationalism) creeds to establish itself in New England. It was an outgrowth of the Episcopal Church and preserved the name Methodist Episcopal until 1939, though its tie with the Church of England was dissolved at the close of the Revolution. Their leaders were revivalists, with an infectious and homey appeal.

The first Methodist preachers in this area were Rev. William Black and Rev. Cornelius Cook, both of whom passed through Norwalk in the mid-1780s. Methodism at that time represented a reaction to the perceived worldliness and lack of vitality in the more established churches. Methodists organized in small neighborhood groups, called classes, for learning about the faith. Classes were formed in (New) Canaan Parish and Stratford in 1788. A year later, the great pioneer Methodist circuit preacher, Rev. Jesse Lee, held services in Norwalk, Canaan, and Redding. And in June 1791, Bishop Francis Asbury, head of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, reported that he preached in Wilton to "serious, feeling, well-behaved people" at Squire Rockwell's house (location not known).

A Methodist class was formed in 1790 in Georgetown, with Rev. John Bloodgood as the minister on the circuit. The Georgetown Methodist Church, now located on Church Street in the Wilton part of Georgetown, was the first Methodist Church in Wilton. In 1791, N. B. Mills and Aaron Hunt were preachers, and in 1792, Joshua Taylor and Smith Weeks succeeded them. A number of Wilton Congregational members transferred to the Methodists at that time, including Michael Abbott, Abijah Betts, Daniel Betts, Abraham Hurlbutt, and Ezekiel Morgan. A Methodist Society was formed in Silvermine in 1808, and several others followed in Wilton, starting in 1830.

### *Episcopal Church*

The move to organize an Episcopal church in Wilton coincided with the move to organize the Town of Wilton, and included many of the same Episcopalians who were unhappy with the Congregational taxation on all who could not present a certificate from another denomination.

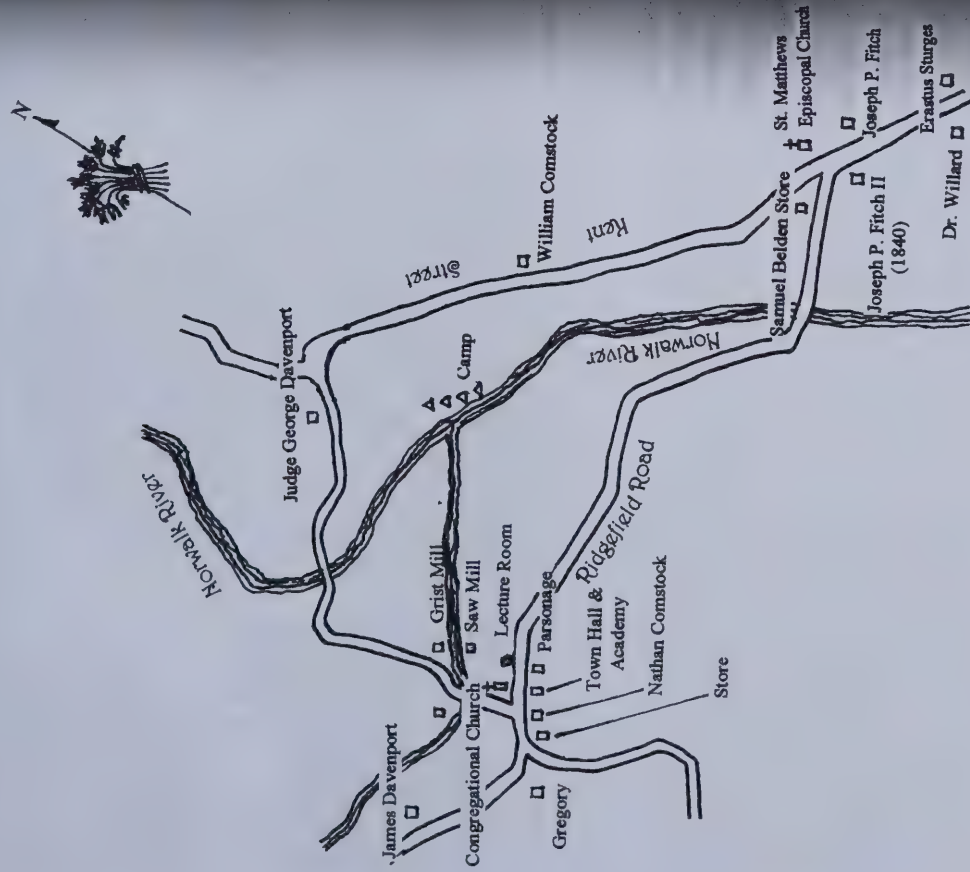
On June 21, 1802, the same day on which the first Wilton Town Meeting was held, a notice was posted for the organization of an Episcopal Society in Wilton. The sponsors were the leading Episcopalians of Wilton: Samuel Belden, David Lambert Jr., Daniel Church, Stephen Keeler, Samuel Marvin and William Sterling. The meeting was held on July 1 in the Pimpe-

waug schoolhouse, then located on the west side of Danbury Road, north of the Marvin Tavern. Daniel Church was selected as senior warden, Samuel Belden as junior warden, and David Lambert Jr. as clerk. There were sixty-one names on the 1802 membership list, representing fifty-five families and six unmarried people. Most were already members of St. Paul's in Norwalk. In addition to those six named above, the first list of members in 1802 included:

*James Arnold*  
*Rev. David Belden*  
*Samuel Jr. and William Belden, sons of Samuel*  
*Daniel Betts Jr. and his son Sherman*  
*Stephen Britto and his son Isaac*  
*John Cannon*  
*Daniel Jr., Fitch, and James W. Church, sons of Daniel*  
*James Davis*  
*Lyman Edwards*  
*George Elwood*  
*Samuel Fitch and sons Samuel Jr. and Zachariah W.*  
*John Gilbert*  
*Theophilus Hanford*  
*Molly Hanford*  
*Nathan and Jabez Hanford, sons of Phineas*  
*Nathaniel Hendrick*  
*Abraham Hurlbutt*  
*Job Hodges*  
*Peter James and sons Jemmy and William*  
*Seth Keeler*  
*John Keeler 2nd, son of Stephen*  
*Elijah Keeler, brother of Stephen*  
*William Long*  
*Nathan Marvin*  
*Sarah and Lucy Marvin, sisters of Samuel*  
*John Morgan and sons Joseph and Jeremiah*  
*James Morgan and sons Salmon, Ezekiel, Joel, and Stephen*  
*Asa Olmstead*  
*Jared Patchen*  
*Clapp and Eliud Rockwell*  
*Peter Smith*  
*David Sloan*  
*Nathaniel Sterling, son of William*  
*Daniel Sturges*  
*Elias and Ezekiel Sturges, sons of Jabel*  
*Edmund Tuttle*



## WILTON CENTER—1838



Before the railroad, centers of activity clustered at crossroads.

In order that the fine art of swearing would not be lost when he was gone, Major Sam trained Jack at his knee. By all accounts, he trained him well.<sup>22</sup>

On the southwest corner of the intersection was the fine residence built by Captain Clapp Raymond in 1772, in front of his earlier abode. Ownership of the house passed to Benajah Strong Comstock in 1799, then to Asahel and Zadock Raymond in 1815, and to Elias Sturges in 1823, an ill-fated hatter\* who also maintained a tavern and stage coach stop, and from Sturges's heirs

\* He was killed in 1825 when his wagon loaded with hat boxes tipped over and fell on him in

to Joseph P. Fitch II (1790–1868) in 1840. It remained in the Fitch family until 1930. One of Wilton's oldest houses, it was moved in January 2001 down the street to 224 Danbury Road to make way for a state road-widening project.

Joseph P. Fitch II was a farmer, blacksmith, hatter, and merchant, at first in partnership with Abijah Betts, then with his own store on Danbury Road south of his house. He also was a staunch Democrat and Wilton postmaster from 1839 to 1841 and from 1844 to 1861, for the most part years when the Democrats controlled the White House and political appointments.

Sherman Platt Fitch (1822–1894), son of Joseph II, took over the store from his father and followed Samuel Belden Jr. as Wilton Town Clerk, from 1851 to 1863, keeping the Clerk's office in the Fitch store until it burned on May 17, 1862. Fortunately, the Town records were saved by postmaster and storekeeper Charles M. Janes, who was sleeping in the building. In 1863, Fitch was appointed to a position in the customs office in New York City, thus becoming Wilton's first known commuter. He was associated with the Customs House until October 1887. He was a lifelong member of St. Matthew's, organist and choir director, and chief fund-raiser for the purchase of the church organ.

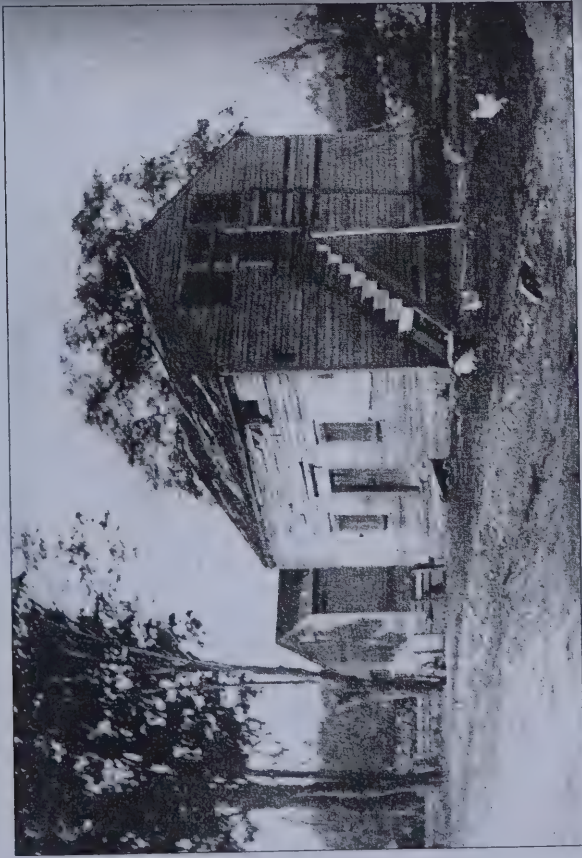
Thaddeus Hoyt owned a store on Danbury Road southwest of the Sharp Hill Road intersection, which acquired an unsavory reputation for hawking drunks. Grand jurymen Samuel Comstock, adopted son of Major Samuel, in July 1835 received a complaint that Hoyt's patrons were disturbing the neighborhood by carousing, fighting, drinking, and swearing. Eleven persons, black and white, were counted in a state of intoxication and Mr. Hoyt did not seem to disapprove. The witnesses filing the complaint were Hiram Jones, William Dudley, Ira Betts, Caleb Hoyt, and Abraham Hubbell. When Hoyt died in 1847, the store was sold at auction and run by George Lockwood, and later by David Godfrey. The store building was bought by Sarah Davenport in 1899 and leased to a Mr. Millward for a "wheelman's rest," in the heydays of bicycling at the turn of the twentieth century.

Farther south, on the northwest corner of Wolfpit Road, there was a store run successively by Lewis Arnold, Daniel Birchard, Aaron Hyatt, Wilton's first postmaster, and William Cable, whose establishment was referred to as a tavern when frequented by the railroad builders in 1851. Across from Wolfpit Road, on the east side of Kent Street (now Danbury Road), James H. Taylor maintained a cabinet shop. Taylor was also the town undertaker for over fifty years, from 1847 to his death in 1899. In 1897, Taylor observed that he had buried more people than the current population (1,722 in 1890) of Wilton. He kept a record of all of his customers.<sup>23</sup>

Another active corner in the Kent district was at the intersection of Westport and Danbury Roads where Daniel Betts IV and his brother-in-law







*Betts Store stood over a hundred years at intersection of Westport and Danbury Roads.*

general store from 1784 to 1827.\* About ten years later, Abijah Betts, a distant relative, reopened the store and continued it until his death in 1877. The unused building stood until March 1905. Also at that corner was the Lambert family residence, built in 1727, where Samuel F. Lambert as postmaster maintained the town post office from 1831–1839 and again 1841–1844. Nearby to the northwest was the Kent district schoolhouse and, after 1847, the Whitlock Academy was located south of the Lambert house.

At the corner of Grumman Hill and Danbury Roads, Eliphalet Whitlock had a store from 1810 to 1820 and Zalmon Dikeman was a storekeeper there before 1837. To the south, on the west side of the road was the brewery of Jehiel Grumman, maker of beer and champagne ale for sale by the barrel or half barrel.<sup>24</sup> He later switched to soda and sarsaparilla. Next was the comb factory of Charles Janes (1806–1855), a few hundred feet north of Mead's Lane (now Kent Road). By 1870 it had become the Kent Bolt factory, owned by William W. and George S. Beers. William Beers, a son-in-law of Benjamin Gilbert, was President of Gilbert & Bennett Manufacturing Co. from 1876 to 1879.

Charles Boughton/Bouton had a general store on the east side of Danbury Road across from Kent Road. This store at 26 Danbury Road contin-

ued under a succession of owners well into the twentieth century. Ignatz Kuehnell last operated it as the South Wilton Grocery.

Butchers George and Marcellus Green slaughtered 175,000 pounds of meat in 1860 in their slaughterhouse on Westport Road. A store was kept on Chestnut Hill near Nash's Four Corners (Westport Road intersection) by David Bennett and another by Thaddeus Waterbury at 306 Westport Road. In South Wilton, small hat shops were run by Daniel Church, William Jessup, and Samuel P. Randle.

Frederick Benedict bought property in 1829 on the east side of Belden Hill Road north of Old Farm Road and began making shoes. In 1860, he had eighteen employees and made 12,000 pairs of ladies shoes, but by 1864 he was out of business, probably a victim of the shoe manufacturing machinery that took over 85 percent of the business between 1860 and 1875.<sup>25</sup> Wilton had 155 shoemakers in 1850, 142 in 1860, and only thirty in 1880. Jehiel G. Rockwell had a carriage manufactory in the 1850s at 216 Belden Hill Road, later converted into a cider mill; cider mills were found in every neighborhood and hard cider was the beverage of choice in Wilton.

## North of Town Hall

On the road to Ridgefield, the store at the junction of Drum Hill and Ridgefield Roads was continued by Charles Middlebrook, son of Samuel, until his death in 1831. He was followed at this site by the shoe manufacturing operation of Lewis S. Keeler. At the corner of Nod Hill, the Lewis Middlebrook general store passed to his brother-in-law Jesse Smith, then to his cousin Matthew Middlebrook. After being burned and rebuilt, it was taken over by James Comstock, grandson of B. Strong Comstock, in 1861. The Middlebrook district school was near the Nod Hill corner, at first located south of the Comstock Cemetery and after 1851 at 15 Nod Hill Road. It has been converted to a residence.

Farther north, opposite the corner of DeForest and Ridgefield Road on the east side, Lewis Olmstead started a store and shirt factory in 1834. At this time, there were no sewing machines and the work was all done by hand. Mr. Olmstead received orders from merchants in New York and cut the patterns; his women employees assembled and sewed the shirts in their homes. He paid in merchandise from his store or in cash. As the business grew, his son-in-law Elbert Olmstead, a distant blood relative, joined him. After 1850, when the sewing machines of Howe, Singer, Wheeler, and Wilson of Bridgeport came into general use, the Olmsteads moved the business across the street to a building behind the old 1727 Jeremiah Mead Tavern (2 DeForest Road). It was reported in the 1860 census that the Olmstead shirt factory employed 150 women. Hurd's *History of Fairfield County*, published in 1880, honored both Lewis and Elbert by including their biographies and portraits.

\* Records and receipts for the years 1805–1827 are in the Wilton History Room.







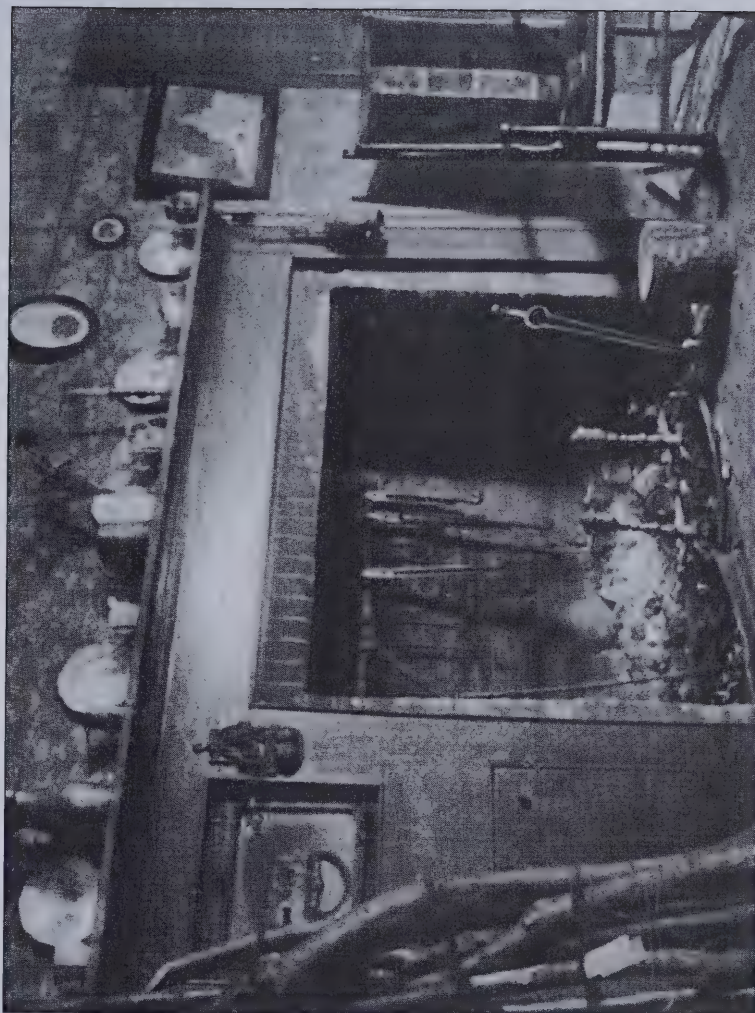
lens, houses, and farm buildings completed the Warncke's farm, where local to buy produce and cider.



In the foreground, the hand-hewn sign points to Ridgefield. This road once crossed the railroad tracks and a wooden bridge into Wilton Center.



This small station was located on the north side of Kent Road as viewed from Danbury Road. It was also called Hopkins Station on an old timetable. Fred Hopkins was for many years station agent at the main Wilton station. Most recently, commuters stood in a small metal shed when waiting for a train.



This is the fireplace from the original kitchen of the Sloane-Raymond-Fitch House, now the Wilton Heritage Museum belonging to the Wilton Historical Society. The house, given by Ralph Piersall, is at 249 Danbury Road. It has been restored and is the society's headquarters. It was the Fitch family homestead for a hundred years.





"But while we are looking at the governor, all other eyes in the room are fixed upon the young bride, the winsome Susannah Rogers, the sweetest girl in all Norwalk, so even her rejected suitors say. Her gown is of finest Indian muslin, beautifully embroidered on waist, cape and skirt, and all by her fair hands. Around her white neck and on her plump arms are costly pearls, a gift from her aunt, Mrs. Moses Rogers of New York.

"Following the bride are two others, no less interesting to us. The first is the bride's widowed mother, the gracious and queenly Elizabeth Fitch Rogers.

"Her dress is of myrtle green satin and came straight from England, by the London Packet, at the cost of 50 pounds, for tradition says this distant connection of mine had strong sympathies with the powers that were, and no patience with those who wore homespun and drank sage tea for conscience sake.

"Beside her walks her father, the old notary. His shapely legs are encased in white silk stockings and his stout figure is in black small clothes and a plum colored coat, with a lining of cherry satin. His ruffles are of lace and his powdered hair glitters with diamond dust, while his face is beaming with pride and pleasure at his favorite grandchild's fortunate alliance.

"The groom comes forward to meet his bride in the English fashion, a handsome youth, one of the proud Lamberts. His small clothes are of black velvet, while his coat and waist coat are of bright blue broadcloth, lined with white satin and glittering with silver buttons. The Rev. Jeremiah Leaming in his robes performs the ceremony, and the shrewd, kindly notary steps forward with solemnity and gives the bride away. . . .

"The Governor, like a magnet, draws the older men about him. They talk of the growth of town and colony and then, in sterner voices, they speak of a subject ever present in their minds, our relations with the mother country.

"The Governor says but little; his heart is torn between his two countries, but his strong sense of justice bids him take the side of the colonies. His face is grave and mouth compressed. Does his keen, far reaching mind already behold this much loved town, fair Norwalk, a scene of rioting and carnage?

"The old notary has no such fears. Ever loyal to king and church, and his conception of duty, he refused to read the signs in the already lowering clouds. Well it was, that he died before the struggle came which gave birth to the nation; that he died never knowing that his old home would be destroyed by the powers to whom he was so loyal, and that Fitch's Point, and all his broad acres, would during the fortunes of war, pass into other hands. But see, the guests are all leaving, for it is 9 o'clock and Norwalk people, you know, keep early hours."





always rewarded by a bowl of the fragrant, steaming tea. It was said that good Mr. Moses St. John, her father-in-law, tried to argue Mrs. St. John out of her life-long habit, and even went so far, in his patriotic wrath, as to dump the boiling water out of the kettle. But all to no avail. Mrs. St. John calmly continued her tea drinking.

Norwalk's first real measure savoring of war was passed February 6, 1775, and concerned those persons which the "committee of inspection" newly appointed, had ordered for particular reasons, to bring in their arms. At the same meeting, the townsfolk voted that "they disapprove of ye unnecessary use of gun-powder, and recommend it to the committee of inspection to take care of the matter." The committee included Phineas Hanford, Stephen St. John second, Thaddeus Betts, Nathaniel Benedict, Osias Merwine, Lemuel Brooks, Thomas Fitch, Uriah Rogers, Jabez Gregory, Seth Seymore, Timothy Fitch, Daniel St. John, Blackleach Jesup, Daniel Betts, Jr., Clap Raymond, Ezra Gregory, James Richards, Moses Comstock, Samuel Cook Silliman, Samuel Richards and Jesse Raymond.

The town was thrown into a panic in January of the year 1776 when there broke out in the vicinity of Norwalk and Fairfield, an uprising fostered by men who called themselves "The Nullifiers." These men opposed all taxes and the payment of all obligations for the raising of funds for soldiers. They announced that persons in debt should not be liable to be sued for the same, nor be liable to pay any interest on obligations; and that justices of the peace should not sign any writs nor grant any executions, nor should officers serve writs. The townsmen, terrified by the idea that such an outlaw group might gain control in the community, immediately called a town meeting and vigorously voted: "that the same (the nullifiers) have a direct tendency to set aside all law, and leave us in the hands of a merciless set of men, and to throw us into confusion and distraction and to deprive us of all our valuable and constitutional rights. We therefore do hereby vote and agree to use our utmost

## REVOLUTIONARY WAR BEGINS

### CHAPTER XIII

*Troubled Rumblings Reach Town—Nullifiers Bring Terror Here—King George Comes to Norwalk—Prominent Figures On Battlefield Here—British Land In Westport—Danbury and Ridgefield Burned.*

TROUBLED rumblings and sinister mutterings reached the Norwalk people from the outside world during the next few years, 1770 to 1775, informing them that all was not well between King and colonies. They themselves took no part, however, in the loud outbursts and wild demonstrations against the Mother Country, which were prevalent in America at the time. Norwalk citizens did meet, however, in August, 1770, to name a committee to attend the New Haven meeting called for the purpose of discussing affairs relative to the importing of goods. Captain John Cannon, Colonel Thomas Fitch and Captain Benjamin Isaacs were so chosen.

By this time, all the former, heavy and unfair taxes levied on the colonies by Great Britain had been abandoned with the exception of the tax on tea. The latter tax naturally affected the price of tea in Norwalk. Many of the local people refused to drink tea at all, moved partially by patriotism and partly by the outrageous prices. Others changed the size of their cups, and tea became a distinct luxury served in receptacles even smaller than the demi-tasse.

Story has it that there was one lady in Norwalk who wasn't concerned either with patriotism or money where her tea was concerned. This was Mrs. St. John who lived in the old Josiah St. John House on Cannon street, near the ancient sawmill. Mrs. St. John was immensely fond of her "little sip" and neighbors who dropped in of an afternoon, to enjoy an hour or so by her comfortable hearth were





influence, power and strength, to disapprove and to discountenance every such illegal measure; and do everything in our power, unitedly, to aid and assist the authority in suppressing the same in every proper and legal way."

In December, 1781, at another town meeting, the Fathers passed an act entitled "Judgment Against Inimical Persons." Included among these "inimical persons" were all those who might be classed as outlaws, "riotous" or "dangerous to the liberties and the independence of the United States of America." On the list were: Obadiah Wright, Nathan Burwell, jr., Thomas Hanford, Nathan Jarvis, Thomas Fairweather, David Bolt, Peter White, Hezekiah Whitney 2nd, Nathan Gregory, Phillip Scribner, Hezekiah Belden, John Beldin, Edward Nash, Gershom Raymond, James Fillio, William Bolt, Ebenezer Church, David Lambert, Goold Hoyt, Abraham Whitney, John Saunders, jr., Garner Olmstead, Richard Patrick, Nathan Fitch. Their names were duly enrolled on a list labelled: "Inimical and dangerous" and placed in the hands of the town clerk.

Norwalk turned patriotic with the signing of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776. Committees of inspection were appointed, watches were set, and in December, 1776, on application of Thaddeus Betts, Esq., there were brought here, six cannon, including two four-pounders and four three-pounders, one hundred round shot to suit them and grape shot in proportion, from the Salisbury furnace. The latter were stored in a magazine erected early in the year "on the hill between Mr. Leaming's house and Ebenezer Lockwood's," near St. Paul's church.

#### KING GEORGE IN NORWALK

A few days after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, King George came to Norwalk. His visit was entirely unexpected but he was heartily welcomed just the same. Not all of him came to Norwalk, of course, just

small portions, for there were many other towns in the country which demanded a part of him. It could hardly be said that he came here of his own volition, but rather that his visit was the result of the actions of well-meaning citizens.

It so happened that on August 21, 1770, a fine lead statue of King George had been placed at Bowling Green, New York, in honor of the King's father's birthday. It was an excellent piece of work and pictured the sovereign seated majestically astride a noble horse. But, after the signing of America's Declaration, the statue did not appear in the citizens' eyes as a very decorative piece of scenery. On the contrary, they looked upon it as something quite offensive. And so on the night of July 11, 1776, they promptly dethroned His Majesty and when the morning of the 12th dawned, only the pedestal remained as evidence of the once noble piece of art. King George was forthwith unhorsed, his body and his animal hacked to bits and part of him was shipped to sea, while the rest traveled across the country wrapped in paper packages. One John Cannon, New York merchant, formerly of Norwalk, who lived right near Bowling Green, sent some of the statue by sloop to this harbor. The rest of the statue was brought to Connecticut on horseback, under cover of darkness and finally taken to the home of Major General Oliver Wolcott, in Litchfield. Here in an old shed, at the back of the ancient house on South st., built in 1754, under the shade of a comfortable apple tree, the remains of the King were melted in a huge pot.

Crowds of the villagers stood around and watched the features of their Sovereign slowly change to the blurriness of a molten mass. More than 42,000 bullets were made out of His Majesty, King George. They proved a godsend to Connecticut, sadly lacking in adequate ammunition and cannon with which to carry on its end of the war.

#### HARD TIMES HERE

Lack of bullets did not by any means constitute the whole of Connecticut's troubles in the beginning of the Revolution-



ary war. Several other hoodoos mocked her footsteps. Most important of all was the difficulty in raising fast enough the required number of men for the army. The second problem was concerned with clothing and feeding the men, after the battalions were filled. Thirdly, there was the smallpox scourge.

Last but not least, there was a continual shortage of salt in Connecticut from the time the war commenced until it ended. Since salt was used in those days by all housewives, not only for seasoning, but for "salting down" all meat and fish in lieu of iceboxes, the shortage was a very serious one. The scarcity and high value of salt in Norwalk is revealed in town meeting under date of October 14, 1776, when one Donald McAuley on whose farm there was a large quantity of the precious mineral, was called before the town fathers and did promise to sell his salt at a price not more than 12 shillings, (about \$3) a bushel. Of course, even Mr. McAuley's generosity couldn't supply the whole of Norwalk with salt, and so, many of the residents resorted to making their own salt, even as the people in most of the Connecticut coastal towns were doing. Large pans or kettles were filled with salt water and then left for hours, simmering over slow fires until the water had entirely evaporated and only the salt remained. Meanwhile, Connecticut was offering bounties to those who would produce 500 or more bushels of salt. In June, 1777, the government commenced making salt pans for the use of those who were evaporating the salt water, the pans to be made "as fast as they can consistently, with the casting of cannon, which must not be interrupted."

In September of the same year, Nehemiah Benedict, Nathaniel Benedict and David Comstock were appointed a committee to go to Boston and receive a quantity of salt, about 70 bushels, which had been set aside for Norwalk. The town fathers, August 10, 1778, voted the selectmen power to distribute among the inhabitants, a certain quantity of salt purchased by the state for Norwalk. After the division had been made and it was discovered that a small

amount of salt was still left, it was decided that the remainder should be given the families of soldiers who were then fighting at the front.

That the Town of Norwalk made other provision for the comfort and welfare of the soldiers' families, besides seeing that they had sufficient salt, is evidenced by a town meeting record under the date of March 12, 1777, which considered the solution of the problem of the slow filling of the battalions. The town fathers, realizing that many citizens hesitated to enlist because they did not like to leave behind them, their families, for whom the government made no provision, called a town meeting to consider the care of the soldiers' wives and children.

The gist of the meeting March 12, 1777, was to the effect that every man who volunteered for service would be assured that while he was gone, were his family in need, it would be cared for until his return, within reasonable limits. Of what happened if he never returned, no mention was made. Food and clothes were to be obtained for the soldiers' families, "at prices stated by law." There was a distinct connection between this resolution and a second passed at the same meeting to the effect that the town fathers would assist the officers of the town in carrying into effect a certain law just passed by the state entitled "An act to prevent monopolies and oppressions, by excessive and unreasonable prices for many of ye necessities and conveniences of life."

Very shortly after the Revolutionary War broke out, "profiteers" made their appearance. Some posed as government agents and bought up large quantities of food and clothing, later selling the same to the government at their own prices. Others purchased everything in sight and held it until the demand for it grew so insistent they were able to cull the exorbitant prices they demanded. In November, 1776, the government passed a law, regulating the prices of various staple articles, beyond which prices it was unlawful to go. October, 1777, saw the passage of another act by Connecticut wherein the people of the state were advised





to discountenance profiteers, whom the state considered were "totally unworthy of election to any public office and even as the vilest pests to society." A month later the state passed a further act which provided that certain articles could only be purchased in small quantities, "except on license given by the town."

From time to time the government of Connecticut found it necessary to issue new price lists owing to the fact that the scarcity of goods kept forcing the prices higher. Great price differences are shown in the two lists of 1776 and 1778. Here are some of them: 1776, wheat \$1.50 bushel and \$2.43 in 1778; 1776, corn \$.75 bushel, and \$1.12 in 1778; 1776, West Indian Rum, \$1.91 gallon and \$4.50 in 1778; 1776, molasses, \$1.00 gallon and \$2.25 in 1778; 1776, men's shoes, \$2 and in 1778 \$3. After the second list was made public by the state, Norwalk voted to procure sufficient copies to provide every household with one at the expense of the town, so that the householders would be protected against the profiteers.

Those were hard times, and they were busy times. The women and children, in addition to caring for themselves, had to assist in the provision of clothing for their soldiers. Each family was required to provide so many garments. The women carded the wool, "hetched" the flax and wove the cloth. When the people had been taxed to the limit, the town borrowed money to purchase material for the garments.

Times would not have been so hard for the Norwalkers during the Revolutionary War had the people not been pestered by disease brought on by unsanitary conditions and ignorance.

Smallpox was perhaps the most horrible, if not the most hopeless disease, with which the New Englanders had to battle in the early days and Norwalk came in for her share of the plague, for this town was no farther advanced than any other in the matter of scientific treatment of disease or in matters of sanitation and drainage. When inoculation

was first introduced the idea was received with horror, but it was not long before the people began to see its benefits and to demand it. Smallpox classes or parties were formed and whole families and community groups passed through the ordeal "ensemble," breaking out, sweating, scaling and convalescing together. Sometimes these parties were held in private homes and sometimes in hospitals. Dr. Uriah Rogers of Norwalk advertised his new smallpox hospital "just within the jurisdiction line of the Province of New York" in the Connecticut Courant of November 30, 1767. The charge was only \$20 per patient and one might come alone or in a "set." A cordial welcome was promised in either case. Mention of other smallpox hospitals appears in the local records from time to time, in 1779 when permission was given for smallpox inoculation in the homes of Moses Bixbe and Captain Solomon Morehouse," in 1791, 1797 and 1799.

#### GENERAL TRYON APPEARS

To the very doors of Norwalk came the war early in April in the year 1777, when General William Tryon, British soldier and governor landed on the shores of Compo, advanced through Westport, burned parts of Danbury and Ridgefield and killed a number of the local soldiers. Several outstanding characters took part in the battles of Compo, Ridgefield and Danbury, and later in the burning of Norwalk. Heading the list was General Tryon who took a fiendish delight in tormenting the helpless in his power; next came Benedict Arnold, noble fighter and despicable traitor, who distinguished himself in the battle of Ridgefield.

In addition, there were: Nathan Hale, who passed through Norwalk on his dangerous mission as a spy; General David Wooster, American patriot, who lost his life on the battlefield of Ridgefield; General Samuel Parsons, American patriot, who gave battle to the British in Norwalk, compelling them to retreat; Brigadier General Oliver Wol-





cott, who also gave battle to the British in Norwalk; and Captain Israel Putnam who fought in the battle of Ridgefield.

Let us stop for a moment and consider those who took part in the purely local history: Tryon, Hale, Parsons, Wolcott.

Ireland was Tryon's birthplace, in 1725. He found himself in 1751 a captain in the British army, from which rank he rose to lieutenant colonel. After coming to this country, he gained the lieutenant governorship of North Carolina and later the governorship of New York. When the Revolutionary War broke out, Tryon fled to the sloop Halifax, lying off New York. However, when Howe occupied New York and everything was safe again, he returned. In 1778, he resigned as governor of New York but retained his position as general in the army.

In 1777 he attacked Ridgefield and Danbury.

In 1779, he accomplished the burning of New Haven, Fairfield and then Norwalk. The general returned to England in ill health in 1780 and died in 1788 in London. Tryon was generally hated throughout the country. His rigorous administration, and his cruelty on many unnecessary occasions, incurred the intense bitterness of the patriots. The Indians looked upon him in terror and called him "The Big Wolf."

The ministry was the goal set by the parents of Nathan Hale for their son, who visited Norwalk on his way to Long Island on his trusted mission as a spy for George Washington, during the Revolutionary War.

It is not known from just which point on this coast that Hale embarked for Long Island, but it is known that he bade good-bye on the Norwalk shores to his companion, Sergeant John Hempstead of his own company of Knowlton's Rangers, and was taken across to Huntington, Long Island by Captain Pond in the Sloop "Schuyler," according to Stephen Jenkins in his "Old Boston Post Road." Without exciting suspicion, Hale succeeded in getting the necessary

plans and information concerning the enemy forces on Long Island. He had just reached a point on the Island which he considered safe for a crossing to Norwalk again, when he was captured by the British and later hanged.

Honoring the memory of Nathan Hale, the Norwalk chapter of the D. A. R., on April 19, 1901, placed a large and handsome memorial drinking fountain at the foot of Armory Hill, where it is said the brave soldier stopped for a few moments to get water for his mount. Later, when Armory Hill was widened, the memorial was removed and placed on the grounds at the rear of the present D. A. R. headquarters in the old Town House on Mill Hill. On one side the trough bears the words: "In memory of Nathan Hale. The path of duty was the way to glory. Erected by the Norwalk Chapter of the D. A. R., and patriotic friends." The inscription on the other side reads: "Children of the town of Norwalk have given this tablet in loving memory of him whose last words were: 'I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.'"

Oliver Wolcott was a brigadier general in the Revolutionary war and it was at his home in Ridgefield that the gilded leaden statue of King George was melted into bullets. Oliver was the son of Roger Wolcott named governor of Connecticut in 1750. Oliver was himself named governor in 1796. His son, also named Oliver, after himself, was the third governor of the Wolcott name in Connecticut. Brigadier General Wolcott assisted in the defense of Norwalk in 1779. Samuel Holden Parsons, general, who also figured in local history, was born in 1737, the son of Jonathan Parsons, one of the founders of the Methodist Episcopal church in America. During the Revolutionary War, the year 1778 found him in command in the New York Highlands. In July, 1779, he gave battle to the British here in Norwalk, forcing them to retire. In 1780, Parsons was made a major general and assigned to the command of the Connecticut line, where he served until the end of the war. The general



was drowned in Big Beaver River while returning from a mission to the Indians on Lake Erie, 1789.

#### RIDGEFIELD, DANBURY BURNED

Hearing that large quantities of provisions, war munitions, clothing and medicines were being stored in Ridgefield and Danbury, Sir William Howe ordered General William Tryon to either burn or else bring back with him, those provisions and supplies. April 25, 1777, 26 British ships appeared off Compo Point and 2,000 armed troops, with Tryon in charge, landed on the sandy beach. In the encounter that followed with the natives, one American soldier was killed and one British major and three soldiers were wounded. The latter four were taken back to the British boats.

Arrived in Danbury, Tryon proceeded to destroy everything on which he could lay his hands including: 1790 tents, 700 barrels of flour, 2000 bushels of grain, much clothing, 1800 barrels of pork and beef, and "ankle deep ran the fat from the smoldering meats" according to Rockwell's "History of Ridgefield." Nineteen houses were burned and 20 shores and shops. In Ridgefield, General David Wooster, patriot was killed, and General Benedict Arnold, who had come down from New Haven with a force of his own, fought the fight which earned for him unstinted glory. During the battle of Ridgefield, nine bullets went through his horse and he narrowly escaped death. Whatever else may be said of Arnold, and Fiske the historian maintains that he was shabbily treated long before any thought of treason entered his mind, the fact remains that he was an uncommonly brave soldier.

Just before Arnold died, a broken-hearted old man in England in 1801, he asked, not for his smart scarlet British uniform, but for his American "old blue and buff one." One of the last entries in his diary says: "It is the only

uniform I have ever worn with honor and I would be buried in it." The very last entry in his diary follows:

"June 14th, 1801 (Note by an unknown hand, probably Miss Fitch) General Arnold expired at half past six this morning. His last moments were unconscious, but at dawn he was heard calling to his body-servant, Sage. He lay across the bed, half dressed, his lame leg in the buff breeches, the other still unclothed, as if he had fainted while drawing it on; on his body an old blue coat they told me had been his American uniform." — "The End."

Before leaving Ridgefield, the British burned six houses, killed a number of cattle, robbed homes of clothing and destroyed two mills. On the return journey to the coast, through the outskirts of Norwalk, the British helped themselves to cattle, horses, clothing and provisions.

Captain Ozias Marvin was in command in Norwalk at the time. From the moment that Tryon and his men landed at Compo, to the time they embarked for Long Island again, he watched every move of the British, and with his soldiers, hung upon their rear and harassed their march. He took part in the battle of Ridgefield. Captain Marvin supplied many of the continental soldiers with refreshments for which he was later allowed by the General Assembly, 28 pounds, one shilling and four pence lawful money. This was in pay for 45 gallons of rum, 60 pounds of dried beef, eight pounds of sugar, and 25 cases "bottles."





to have been lost off a British ship at the mouth of the Creek.

## TORIES IN NORWALK

### CHAPTER XIV

*Rowayton and South Norwalk Suffer From Marauding Expeditions—Tories Here Send Cattle and Grain Across Sound to Enemy—Rev. Moses Mather of Darien Carried Off by British—Fairfield Is Sacked and Burned.*

During the next few years, marauding expeditions by the British along the coast in this vicinity, were frequent. Squads of the enemy had the habit of coming across from Long Island, landing in Ring's End, Stamford, and then helping themselves to anything on which they could lay their hands, in Stamford, Darien, Rowayton, West, East and South Norwalk. Darien and Rowayton fared the worst. The Britishers would creep up through the villages after dark, attempting to lead the cattle away without creating any disturbance. If caught, they were quick to shoot down the townspeople, or to fire their homes, were protests made.

The colonists protected themselves as best they might. Oscar Mills of Highland Ave., has in his possession an American cannonball which he says was fired by the Norwalkers from a point about 200 yards south of a stone house on Wilson Point (Mrs. Belden Wilson's old home), at another house down on the edge of Hoof and Horn creek (Wilson's Cove). This house was known to be the refuge of certain thieving British. The ball struck the ground in front of the house to the right of an underground passage which led from the house out to the shore edge. Here the British used to load on the cattle they had taken from the Norwalk farms. Mr. Mills has in his possession also, a hand-made, hard steel, British knife believed to have been used by the English for the slaughter of the Norwalk cattle, and

### HOMES PILLAGED

At one time during marauding trips to Rowayton the British ransacked a house and then proceeded to set fire to it by stuffing live coals in the mattress. A neighbor saved the place. The tale is told of Mrs. Phineas Waterbury of Rowayton, who, one dark night, hearing the British driving off her cattle, threw open the window and yelled as loud as she could: "Turn out the Guard!" "Turn out the Guard!" Neighbors almost a mile away later insisted they heard her cry. The British fled. Poor Mrs. Waterbury had an unhappy time of it during the Revolutionary War. Her husband was taken by the British as a prisoner to New York and her 20-year-old son was brought in dead one night, having been shot by the enemy while on guard duty.

Sometimes the British offered pay for the provisions they wanted. One Goodman Wood who lived in the Flaxhill neighborhood was so approached but he declined to do business. One morning Wood awoke to find most of his feathered friends gone. Around the neck of a gander he found a note and a bag of coin. The note read as follows:

"Deacon Wood, your geese are good

And stealing is but slander;

We've bought your geese for a penny a piece,

And paid it to the gander."

The exposed condition of Norwalk meant not only that the town's militia must be retained for defense, but also that an additional guard must be stationed here. So in July, 1777, Colonel Roger Enos of New Haven was ordered to send "the fullest company under his command to the town of Norwalk, to be posted there as guards for the defense of that part of the coast." In October of the same year, after the Norwalkers had suffered serious losses at the hands of the marauders, 71 of the inhabitants sent a memorial to the General Assembly which asked that an armed sloop of





about six or eight guns be sent to cruise in the Sound for their protection.

In May, 1778 the Norwalkers complained again to the Assembly concerning the raids on their farms and cattle. At the time there were numerous Tories in Norwalk who kept up intercourse with the British on Long Island and acted as their agents in the stealing and selling of cattle. The husband of Mrs. Sally Selleck of Rowayton for some time served as middleman for the British in Five Mile and in Darien. But perhaps the most ardent Tory of all in Norwalk, at least the one who made the most money here during the Revolution was Esaias Bouton, descendant of an old Norwalk family. This Tory, known as the "Dweller of the Pampaskeshank" lived midway between Wilson Point and Rowayton on a knoll on Wilson Cove, close to the Pampaskeshank river. His home was a two story frame structure whose main fireplace faced one of the front windows. The reflection of the hearth, when a fire was burning, could be seen far out on the water. Only when the British were able to sight the glowing signal did they land and creep up to Bouton's home. There the owner proceeded to "drive sharp and profitable bargains for produce and cattle from his domain, which could only be designated by his mark, that of a "crop of the left ear."

Bouton was a firm friend of the Rev. Jeremiah Leaming, pastor of St. Paul's Episcopal church, termed "as big a Tory as could be on earth, who continued to pray for the King as long as he dared to." Workmen repairing Bouton's house in 1798 found between the roof boards and the rafters, the following copy of an order in Tryon's own handwriting: "Deliver the beef, grain and vegetables, previously ordered, to my commissary. Send them to the usual place of shipment. Gen. Tryon."

So annoying did the Tories in Norwalk become after a while, that the inhabitants finally called a special meeting when they voted to raise 90 men to serve six months in the protection of the town. These men were to be distributed

as follows: Eighteen east of Norwalk river; eighteen at "Ketchum's"; eighteen at the "going on of Stephen's Island"; eighteen at Old Well; eighteen at Flax Hill; and eighteen in Darien. These men were ordered not only to guard the coast but to keep in subjection non-patriotic people within the Norwalk territory.

#### REV. MATHER CAPTURED

It is quite probable that this action was partly the result of the white hot fury to which the patriots were aroused by the capture of the Rev. Moses Mather of the Darien Congregational church. Rev. Mather, be it known, is ancestor to the Norwalk Mathers and was a descendant of Rev. Increase Mather, theologian and of Cotton Mather, noted Puritan author. Rev. Mather's capture occurred July 22, 1781, when a company of British landed on the west shore of the Pampaskeshank and traveled down to Darien with the intention of taking prisoners certain members of the congregation whom they disliked. According to the Connecticut Journal under date of July 26, 1781: "The enemy's party consisted of about 40, who came over the night before, from Lloyd's Neck in seven boats, which they carried into a thick swamp near the meeting house."

Just before the Sunday morning service, July 22, 1781, in the Darien Congregational church, the Tories arrived at the church. Discovering that all the people they wanted had not attended the morning session, the British decided to wait until the afternoon service. As soon as all had taken their seats inside the church, the English surrounded the place and dared anyone to come out. The Rev. Mather accepted the challenge, leaped, it is said, over the bayonets guarding the door and was promptly taken prisoner. Various others of the parishioners were also captured, in spite of the efforts of the hurriedly gathered coast guard and of sundry inhabitants who exchanged shots with the enemy. Barber, the historian, who states that it was the refugees, or Tories who attacked



the church, says also "the son of Dr. Mather was more fortunate than the rest; as the refugees entered the church he sprang under the seat, and the women sitting before him their clothes hid him from observation."

The Connecticut Journal in speaking of the raid says that the surprise was so complete that only four or five escaped, one of them being a son of Mr. Mather who was slightly wounded in the leg as he was running away. The parishioners were tied in couples and marched down the shore road. The route taken by the captors led over the old Five Mile road to a point west of the head of the Pampaskeshank Inlet (Wilson's Cove) near "Witch Lane" where all embarked for Long Island. The next stop was New York where the captives remained in the horrible Provost prison for many a long week, some of them dying. Mather, who might have fared as badly as the rest, while behind the bars, found his lot much lightened by the mother of Washington Irving, novelist, who, hearing of his plight, saw to it that he had necessary food, clothing and comforts.

Only one entry appears in the Norwalk town records, dealing strictly with the Tories. This was in February 24, 1783 and had to do with the matter of returning Tories who had previously gone off with the enemy. The townspeople "put to vote whether those persons which have gone off and joined themselves with the enemy, should return back and inhabit in this town." "Past in the negative."

At an adjourned meeting, two weeks later, the good people of the town made their decision in the matter a little more emphatic. They had decided not only to keep out of the town all Tory sympathizers known to them, but to investigate the actions of all suspicious looking people who might attempt to make settlement in Norwalk.

December first of the same year, Hezekiah Rogers, Job Bartram, Isaac Keeler, Saml. Deforest, Justus Hayt, Matthew Gregory, Saml. Comstock, Stephen Betts, Eli Reed, were named a committee "to take directions from the selectmen of this town, and deal with those persons who have

been to the enemy and returned, according to their directions."

On the last Monday in December, 1783, the town fathers evidently relented the stern position they had hitherto taken and while the Christmas spirit was still upon them passed the following: "Voted that the selectmen and committee are to act their discretion respecting those persons which have joined the enemy, notwithstanding any former votes."

#### FAIRFIELD BURNED

Wednesday afternoon, July 7, 1779, British ships, consisting of two large men-of-war, and 48 row galleys, tenders and transports, appeared off the Fairfield shores. About 10 in the evening General William Tryon landed on an out-jutting piece of coast, with some 2,600 men. With him was Brigadier General Garth, who had special charge of the Hessian regiments, the Landgraves and the Yaegers. The British immediately advanced on the town, although somewhat bothered by the firing from a small fort on Grover's Hill.

Scenes of debauchery and cruelty, worse than Fairfield had ever witnessed, continued throughout the night. The Hessian soldiers went from house to house, plundering and burning, taking the very buckles and jewelry from off the women, whom they grossly insulted. Some of them went around in bands, staggering up and down the pretty streets, drunk from the effects of the strong liquor and cider they had stolen. Others danced on the village green and showed off the choice bits of plunder which they had taken.

Fairfield suffered a loss by fire of three churches, two schoolhouses, a court house, a jail, 97 homes, 48 stores, and 67 barns. The burning of Fairfield was followed by the burning of Greens Farms. The British then returned to Huntington Bay, L. I.





Meanwhile, the militia and the guard were mobilizing and planning out a campaign which would effectively hamper the enemy if not completely frustrate its purposes. All the men, with their muskets, met at the parade ground, where they were divided into companies, given their orders, and sent to various sections of the town to watch the movements of the British.

About 9 in the evening, General Tryon landed at Calf Pasture beach with 2,500 men from his fleet of 26 sail. At the time, the Norwalkers did not know the exact number of British, or they might have been more disheartened. There were in town only about 400 patriot troops, 150 of whom were Continentals, commanded by General Samuel Parsons, while the rest were members of the town militia or were volunteers, headed by Captain Stephen Betts and Captain James Richards. After landing very quietly at Calf Pasture, Tryon did nothing further that night. The men just slept on the beach on their arms.

Early the next morning, Sunday, about 3 o'clock, the British moved across to Fitch's Point, where they were joined by the King's American regiment, the Tories. The latter received orders to cross over in flat boats to Old Well, now South Norwalk. This they did, under the command of General Garth, who had been told by Tryon to burn a house at a point just south of Washington st. immediately upon his arrival. This would notify those watching from Fitch's Point that he had disembarked and was ready to carry out the orders of his superior.

Tryon's plan appeared to be to have Garth and his men reach "The Bridge," now Norwalk, through South Norwalk, while he would make the trip through East Norwalk. Garth set out immediately, on landing near Washington st., for his goal. He had not progressed very far, however, before he discerned some patriots on the hills above South Norwalk, in the direction of Flax Hill. He decided that he had better dispatch these soldiers first, before proceeding to finish those up at "The Bridge." Accordingly, he divided his men so

## BURNING OF NORWALK

### CHAPTER XV

*British Come to Norwalk—Terrified Women and Children Hide in Woods—"Battle of the Rocks"—Town Reduced to Ashes—Only Thirty Homes Escape Torch—Norwalkers Who Served in Revolution—D. A. R. Monuments.*

LATE on a warm, sunny, lazy Saturday afternoon, July 10, 1779, when the majority of the local men and women were ending their week's work, at peace with the world, the British fleet of 26 sail piloted by a Norwalk Tory carrying a land force of about 2,500 men under Generals Tryon and Garth, appeared off the shores of Norwalk. The news travelled like wild fire among the terrified citizens of the little town.

Who first spread the alarm of the coming of the British, through Norwalk, is not definitely known, although various historians have given various theories, Dr. T. S. Childs maintaining that the hero was one Onesimus, a slave owned by the New Canaan Comstocks. It is quite probable that a number sighted the vessels when they sailed into the harbor, and broadcast the news. It is more probable that it was the coast guard, stationed at various lookout points along the Sound, who first warned the people of impending disaster. Hysterical terror seized the women of Norwalk when the full import of the presence of the British in the harbor grew on them.

Mothers corralled their offspring, snatched up whatever precious bits of household goods they could carry and hurried off to "The Rocks," above France st., to Wilton, to New Canaan or to whatever hilly or woody spot they believed might temporarily be safe.





that the left wing charged through the fields at the back of South Norwalk, up Spring st., and Flaxhill road, then called West st., while the right wing hurried along Water st. and came out on West ave., by way of Marshall and Ann sts.

At Trinity church, the patriots and the British came together and engaged in a few moments of severe fighting. The latter were somewhat confused, yet they succeeded by force of superior numbers in gaining the summit of the first rise of hill, some of them coming up the steep cliff now known as Crescent Terrace. At the second ascent, up Flaxhill, the British were met by sharp and rapid fire from a large squad of patriots under Captain Richards, secreted behind a stone wall, on a slope leading from the main road to Round Hill. This Round Hill appears to have been situated in what is known as Highland Park, in the woods between Flaxhill Road and the Post road, almost opposite "Shaw's" restaurant on the Post road. On the slope mentioned, the enemy lost three men and several more were wounded. The British thereupon retreated into a nearby field and under cover of another pretended attack, unknown to the patriots, buried their dead. The remains were not found until many years later during excavation work for a new house.

With eagle eye the patriots crouched behind any conceivable protection, wall, tree, house or barn and waited further developments. Suddenly they saw a British officer appear on the brow of Flaxhill road, grandly flourishing a sword as though to urge his men on to battle. Several random shots were taken at the officer who disappeared again as quickly as he had appeared, evidently in haste, "his cocked hat and tall plume appearing as if transferred from the head of the rider to that of the horse," according to description.

After burying their three dead comrades, the British proceeded to Round Hill where they placed a field gun. Nothing happened. General Garth merely remained in position for about an hour and then marched his men down to West ave. again, through Cedar and Garner sts. Up West avenue the British continued their march through Norwalk until

they reached the turnpike, now Armory hill. Very shortly they arrived at the home of Deacon Thomas Benedict, to which place they were attracted by the sight of a large tub of wine and another of cider, on the front stoop. On the site of Thomas Benedict's home, Dr. and Mrs. Frederick J. Morrison, 502 West ave., formerly lived. They still own the property. More and detailed reference will be made to the Deacon's home later.

General Garth had not intended to pause until he reached Norwalk. As a matter of fact, he had been so intent on gaining this point that he had not even paid attention to the random shots of the patriots on the rear flank of his men. However, it was a warm day and Garth and his men felt that they needed a little stimulation, and so invitation, or no invitation, a number generously helped themselves to both the wine and cider which had been set out for the patriots, who had been on guard all night.

While the British soldiers were indulging themselves, urged on by Deacon Benedict who felt that if only enough of them became insensibly drunk, a little less harm would be done, the patriots had changed their position from the rear of Garth's men to the front, slipping around a back road. Very shortly they were crossing a ford which was north of the present bridge in Norwalk, at a double quick pace, and were hurrying to the aid of their comrades who had held their own against Tryon's forces for hours in the business section of the town. Meantime, much had occurred uptown during the time when the British and the patriots were battling downtown at Trinity church, near Flaxhill.

Tryon, after moving his men from Calf Pasture to Fitch's Point at 3 in the morning, commenced the march to Norwalk. He followed the shore and about 4 reached the downtown road, East avenue. Here he met continental troops and militia both slowly retreating before his mass of men, to Grumman's hill, East avenue. This hill, which has been almost cut away during the last few months to make way for a new road, was situated in the vicinity of the Sunset Hills real



estate development, on East avenue. Some of the British continued to force the patriots down East avenue into the center of Norwalk; the majority remained with Tryon.

When the Sabbath dawn broke, the colonists saw Grumman hill "all red" with British. General Tryon sat on a large chair at a table writing orders, on the summit of the hill, where he could readily view the operations of his men and the carrying out of his orders. With what despair and heavy hearts must the people of Norwalk have gazed at the gathered enemy up on the hill! How they must have trembled for their homes, built through the sweat and toil of many years, and trembled for their very lives!

#### NORWALK IN FLAMES

Promptly at 6 in the morning, Tryon gave the order for the burning of Norwalk. The first home to receive the torch, according to old records, was the "house where John Day now lives," near the old steamboat wharf in South Norwalk. As the flames spread from house to house, the crackling of the wood, mingled with the roar of the cannon and the fire of muskets in various parts of the town, rudely broke the quiet and peace of that sunny Sabbath morning.

At the time that he gave the order for the burning of Norwalk, Tryon, according to his own official record of the catastrophe, said he sent his soldiers through the streets of Norwalk, issuing a proclamation of pardon to inhabitants, with an invitation to return to their allegiance to the King. He also said that he assured protection and safety to all those who offered no resistance to his men. General Tryon in his statement, added that he had placed soldiers in front of numerous of the homes in order to protect the inmates and to prevent the destroying of their houses but that the colonists abused the protection, and insisted on firing on the very soldiers sent to guard them, with the result that he, Tryon, found himself forced to burn the homes in order to save his own men. There does not seem to be any sound

#### BURNING OF NORWALK

substantiation for such allegations. The householders, almost without an exception, left the soldiers alone, neither lifting a hand against their enemies, nor speaking a word of rebuke, yet their homes were razed, their valuables and ancestral relics taken, and in many cases, their persons abused.

Only six houses were spared along the line of British march, advance and retreat, four on the east and two on the west side of the harbor, although some 30 homes in all were saved. These were, for the most part, off the main roads over which the soldiers passed. Altogether, 80 dwelling houses, (though some histories say 132) both churches, Congregational and Episcopal, 87 barns, 22 storehouses, 17 shops, four mills, five vessels, and practically all storages of wheat, hay and grain in the town, were burned to the ground. The enemy destroyed all the salt pans along the coast, towed every available whaleboat out of the harbor, took all the town's magazines and stores for its own army, and burned every vessel moored in the river or to the docks, before departing for good at 2 on that memorable Sunday afternoon.

#### "BATTLE OF THE ROCKS"

But before the British were able to accomplish the complete destruction of Norwalk, they were forced to undergo a very unpleasant time, between the hours of 10 and 12, Sunday morning, July 11, 1779, at the hands of the Norwalkers, in the "Battle of the Rocks" above France street. During the morning the militia and the continental troops headed by Generals Samuel Parsons and Oliver Wolcott had gathered on the hill near "The Rocks" from where they continually fired on the enemy at Grumman's Hill, East avenue. In order to drive them from their position Tryon sent a large body of troops to The Rocks. The British soldiers, who anticipated very little trouble, were surprised and chagrined at the very warm reception handed them by the valiant Norwalkers. It is judged that the two forces





came together, even while Norwalk was burning, in France st., at 10 in the morning and that hot fighting continued until high noon.

General Parsons, who had been sent to Norwalk by General George Washington, to take charge of the militia here, had evidently arrived in time to place in position on the hill near The Rocks the battery of six cannon, brought from Salisbury by Thaddeus Betts two years previous. With General Wolcott, who came to Norwalk to supervise the continental troops, he was firmly intrenched on the hill and ready for what might happen. The British, not expecting to be met by any very active resistance were thoroughly surprised to find that most of the manhood of Norwalk had gathered there to defy them.

For two long, hot hours the forces battled, with the militia and continental troops of less than 400 patriot soldiers, pitted against more than half Tryon's 2,500 trained troops. Ardently, vigorously, the Norwalkers fought, with cool and well planned decision, wasting neither shot nor man. Although, according to Captain Stephen Betts' statement, Tryon's men succeeded in gaining mastery of the field, yet the British were ordered to retreat at noon and very shortly they were on their way back to Fitch's Point.

Tryon, in his official report, said that he retired his men in two columns to the place of disembarkation, unassaulted, at 2 in the afternoon. But such does not seem to have been the case, if the word of old inhabitants, passed down through family history, may be taken for aught. What seems to have been nearer the truth, was that the Norwalkers harassed the British from the time they landed until the time they left, giving them uncomfortable times at Flax-hill, at Pudding Lane (Main street) and at France street, and that when the British retreated, the volunteers, the continentals and the town militia clung to Tryon's rear until he was within sight of the spot where he had landed the previous evening.

As far as is known, but two Norwalk men were killed, one

captured and one wounded in the local Revolutionary battle, while according to a report by General Tryon, 20 British were killed, 96 wounded and 32 missing or unaccounted for. It is a significant fact, and at least a little consolation, to know that no sooner had Tryon recrossed the Sound, than he was called before Sir Henry Clinton, British Commander in Chief, and forced to apologize for his conduct in Norwalk, and for his needless destruction of property here.

General Tryon also experienced an uncomfortable moment at the hands of General Parsons from whom he received a scathing letter after the burning of Norwalk. The letter was in answer to one sent Parsons by Tryon, June 18, 1779 before the attack on this city, in which Tryon said: "Surely it is time for rational Americans to wish for a reunion with the parent state and to adopt such measures as will most speedily effect it."

In his reply under date of September 7, 1779, Parsons said he would have written sooner had he not "entertained some hope of a personal interview with you in your descents upon the defenseless towns of Connecticut to execute your master's vengeance. . . . But your sudden departure from Norwalk and the particular attention you paid to your personal safety when at that place, and the prudent resolution you took to suffer the town of Stamford to escape the conflagration to which you had devoted Fairfield and Norwalk, prevented my wishes on that head. This, I hope, will sufficiently apologize for my delay in answering your last letter."

There appears to be a great diversity of opinion among the historians as to the hour and the day on which General Samuel Parsons arrived in Norwalk for the battle during the Revolutionary War. Some insist it was Saturday, July 10, 1779 or even before; others that it was Sunday, after the burning had commenced; still others that it was Monday, when the destruction was accomplished. Practically all the historians include the names of both Parsons and Wolcott in their accounts of the battle near the Rocks, so it might





be just as well to give Parsons credit for a good Sunday's work, morning and afternoon, here in Norwalk.

Both General Washington and Governor Trumbull did everything in their power to prevent the destruction of Norwalk. Washington, at the time, was in the Hudson Highlands. Although the British thought to draw him from his fastness by an attack on a defenceless town, Washington was smarter than they and refused to budge. Proof of the General's clear sightedness is the fact that on July 15, 1779, four days after the burning of this place, the Americans under Wayne, by direction of Washington, succeeded in carrying Stony Point. From that day, the fate of the British was sealed. Thus did Norwalk unconsciously assist in bringing to a speedy and victorious close, the War of the Revolution. Washington had his choice between rushing to the defense of Norwalk as the British hoped he would, and probably losing all he had gained in the Hudson Highlands, or of sacrificing Norwalk to the great cause, by merely giving it what small protection he could. He chose the latter and sent Parsons.

While Washington was planning his best for Norwalk, Governor Trumbull was making all preparations to avert the doom. July 8, 1779 he wrote by express to General Oliver Wolcott in Litchfield ordering him to hasten to southwestern Connecticut. July 11, the Governor, all unaware that Norwalk was even then burning, addressed a letter to Brigadier General Glover of the Continental troops at New London, requesting him to go forward to Norwalk. The following morning Glover made all preparations to advance, not knowing that Norwalk was already in ashes.

#### NORWALKERS KILLED

Jacob Nash and John Rich or Lick, were the two Norwalkers killed in the Battle of Norwalk while John Waters was severely wounded. Fountain Smith was taken prisoner. Jacob Nash, it appears, once a resident of Norwalk, also at

one time lived in Ridgefield. From the latter place he went to Ballston Spa, New York. He returned to Ridgefield when war broke out and came to Norwalk at the time Tryon appeared on the scene. During the battle at France street he received a mortal wound. When Captain Betts ordered him to be cared for, he said: "It is over with me; help somebody else," and died.

John Rich or Lick, who also died, and John Waters, who was badly wounded, are both discussed by Captain Stephen Betts in his testimony delivered before Thaddeus Betts, Justice of the Peace, July 26, 1779:

"John Waters, a Continental soldier fell into ye enemy's hands, delivered up his arms and begged for life. But ye enemy, notwithstanding, assaulted him with a bayonet, with which they stabbed him in sundry places and then one of them presented his Piece and aimed (as ye captain supposed) at his body, but missing that ye ball shattered his arm. Whereupon finding no quarter he made a strong effort to escape which he happily effected. Soon after ye above accident, John Lick or Rich, another Continental soldier, was shot so as to fall and as ye enemy were nigh and crowded fast on our People, he desired Captain Betts to leave him, as they could not take him off without ye greatest hazard. Captain Betts saw Lick no more but says Captain Eels of Col. Wyly's regiment told him he saw Lick after ye enemy had retreated, about two hours after Captain Betts saw him. He was then dead and ye top of his skull torn off, supposed to be blown off by a musquet to dispatch him, and further saith not."

Deaf Fountain Smith of Norwalk was carried off by the British when they burned this town. Mr. Smith, a cooper by trade, occupied a farm on Raymond street, "just off East avenue near the old schoolhouse." Early on that Sabbath morning, Mr. Smith was strolling about his garden, coatless, enjoying the soft summer sunshine. Deafness kept him home. Of a sudden he was seized from behind, his hands tied at his back and he was marched down the





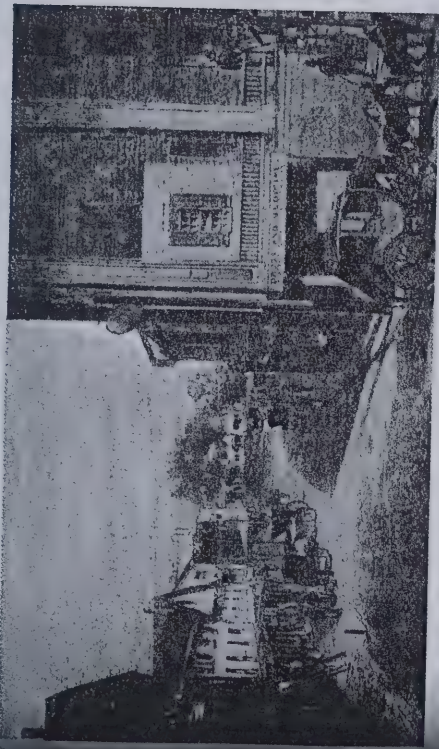
street without more ado, a British prisoner. When the enemy left Norwalk, Smith was taken aboard and later thrown into a miserable prison in New York. Not long afterwards at the age of 54, he died of the hardship. His wife lived to be 93, and it was said that thereafter, she never sat at table with anyone who professed royal sympathy. Smith's remains were not brought back to Norwalk.

Of the British losses, it is difficult to find any definite information. It is known that some of the dead were buried by Garth and his men in the vicinity of Flaxhill. Of what happened to the others, or how many actually lost their lives, there does not seem to be much substantial proof. One historian offers only the simple statement that the loss was little on both sides, one tall British soldier being killed near John Raymond's and another, shot by Seth Abbott.

#### HOMES IN ASHES

Norwalk's losses during Tryon's stay here were far greater by flame than by bullet. Many lovely old houses were burned to the ground, chief among them being the homestead occupied by Governor Thomas Fitch on East ave. The main portion of the residence, which is now the home of Miss Sarah Fitch, 173 East avenue, was reduced to charred wood, only the kitchen wing being saved. For some time after the fire, the Fitch family lived in this wing. When the new home was built, the wing was saved and served as an addition to the residence. It may still be seen on the rear of the house, 173 East avenue.

Most of the Governor's library effects, diplomas and papers and household contents were lost. A seal and two articles of jewelry were saved and bequeathed to a descendant, while a silver tea service which belonged to him and which was secreted in the chimney of his home was rescued and pieces of it are now held by different descendants. An antiquated tea kettle which swung and sung on an antiquated crane in the chimney also escaped the flames, being of iron,



OLD CONNECTICUT HOUSE

Famous Inn of stage coach days, according to story, which stood for many decades on the corner of Main and Wall streets. Later the same building was occupied by the old Boston Store. A new business block was erected on the site in 1929.



FITCH HOME ON EAST AVENUE

The rear portion of this house, 173 East ave., is a section of the original home of Governor Thomas Fitch. The residence was burned when the British came to town, only the kitchen wing being saved. To that wing, now in the rear of the house, a new front was built. Miss Sarah Fitch now lives there.





and is still preserved. Elbirt W. Fitch of 179 Flaxhill road has in his possession a cane which once belonged to Governor Fitch. In each generation the cane has come into the possession of the eldest son in the family.

Mrs. John Darrow of 30 West Main st., owns a land deed which Governor Fitch signed in 1753, before he was made governor, of course. She also has a copy of the funeral sermon given at the time of the executive's death, the sermon having been made up in small pamphlet form shortly after. In her home Mrs. Darrow has a spoon which was secreted in the well on the property of Commodore John Cannon on East avenue, where the Fred Lockwood place is now being torn down. The well in which the spoon and other silver was hidden stood just east of the water hydrant in front of the house. She owns also a plate which was secreted in the chimney of the Cannon house when the British came to town. The house was of immense size for those days, with a chimney large enough to take care of a whole ox, with room for game and poultry on spits besides.

Mrs. Darrow also has a historical connection with the so-called "Oscar W. Raymond place" at 195 East avenue. Mrs. Darrow is a descendant of Samuel Fitch, brother to Governor Thomas Fitch. The house was formerly owned by Jonathan Fitch, grandson of Samuel, and it came straight down the line to Mrs. Darrow, great-grand-daughter of Jonathan Fitch. When the British general set Norwalk afire, the enemy soldiers put the match to the home at 195 East avenue. But the job was badly done and the blaze only charred part of the place. Additions have since been built on to the residence, but the rear of the house is very old and some of the original shingles, placed there before the Revolution, still remain. Mrs. Darrow's mother was a Raymond and her father was Oscar W. Raymond, last owner of the home. It was sold by the daughter's family some eight years ago, after having been in the family for 116 years.





In addition to the large amount of valuable property lost by the Governor during the fire, the entire library collection of Rev. Stephen Buckingham, Norwalk pastor, was destroyed by flames, full 50 years after the poor man's death. There were nearly 1,000 books in the collection, brought from London, and the loss represented one from which Norwalk could hardly expect to recover in very short time. Books in those days were rare and expensive.

Among other buildings which were destroyed by the fire was St. Paul's Episcopal church on the Green and the old farmhouse on Water st., believed by some to have included on its property the "old well" after which the lower part of the city was once called. South Norwalk was termed Old Well for many years.

#### THIRTY HOUSES ESCAPE

It will be remembered that about 30 houses were saved or rather escaped burning during the raid. One of these was the Bissell house, which stood on the corner of Mill hill and Park st., and is now the site of Le Cordon Bleu restaurant. During Revolutionary times it was the home of Thomas Belden and later the residence of Governor Bissell, according to Hall. When Tryon came to town, Belden's housekeeper, in a fever of anxiety about the property under her care, ran across the Green to ask advice of Mrs. St. John, whose house stood where Morgan ave., and East ave. join. It was Saturday night and Mrs. St. John was preparing her bread for baking in the brick oven. In burst the housekeeper to ask Mrs. St. John if she were going to stay. The latter answered no, that she meant to "get out of the way." Thereupon the housekeeper answered that she intended to plead with Tryon to save the house as he had once stayed there overnight. Mrs. St. John seeing her decision, said with true New England thrift: "If you are going to stay, take my dough" and so the housekeeper returned bearing the burning oven wood and the bread. Later, the housekeeper succeeded in saving her master's home, by

#### BURNING OF NORWALK

pleading with Tryon. The British put out the flames which were already licking the walls. Meanwhile, Mrs. St. John and her husband and family, with what effects they could carry, went up into the woods at East Rocks. They took with them a bedstead which they set up and slept on. With them also they took provisions and a cow which provided milk during the short stay in the woods. The St. John house was in the vicinity of the Grumman house, close to the foot of Grumman's hill.

On Main st., in a section then called Mill Plain, was the Gould Hoyt homestead which was saved from the flames through the efforts of Mrs. Hoyt, a former Fairfield lady, who had known General Tryon in the days of peace. Curiously enough it is said that the first ice cream made in Norwalk was served at the Hoyt table. It was of pure cream, flavored and frozen.

Through the efforts of slaves, who were members of the household, the Benjamin Isaacs house which stood on the corner of Wall st. and Isaac st., was saved. The Anson Quintard house on Water st., once a handsome residence, was also spared. On West ave., near Berkley st., was the former home of John Belden of Revolutionary times. It was saved due to the fact, so it is said, that General Garth stored ammunition there during his short stay in Norwalk. Isaac Belden's house, on West ave., now owned by the Catholic club, was built just after the Revolutionary war, on the site of his father's homestead.

Through a lucky accident, the Reuben Mott house, on Belden ave., was saved. British soldiers broke into the milk room at the back of the house, helped themselves to the milk and then set fire to the shelves in the storeroom. It so happened that there was no floor in the place, and when the burning shelves fell, they simply struck the damp earth and smoldered out. The former home of Dr. and Mrs. Frederick J. Morrison, 502 West ave., corner of Maple st., was formerly the home of Congressman Ebenezer J. Hill, father of Mrs. Helena Hill Weed of Wilson Point,



Mrs. Elsie Hill Levitt of Ridgefield, and Miss Clara Hill, now of Mexico. The house itself is on the site of the former Deacon Thomas Benedict home, where Garth's Tory soldiers stopped to refresh themselves on that eventful Sunday morning, July 11, 1779, with wine and cider, placed on the stoop for the Norwalk guards. Back of the house, off Maple st., was a large well, now covered over. Here Washington and Lafayette on their way to and from Boston, are said to have stopped. The tale is told of the manner in which they sat around the curb of the great well and ate their lunch. The well supplied the Benedict home and later the Hill home, with water. Deacon Benedict was quite a well-to-do man, with farm, house, store, cider mill and distillery. His home was temporarily saved from fire, because Garth placed some of his wounded men in it. The store, cider mill and distillery, the British destroyed. Later, they even made an attempt to burn Benedict's house, but as soon as they retreated the people rallied and put out the fire.

Belden Selleck's was another home saved, not because the soldiers didn't make an attempt to burn it, but because they were in too much of a hurry. The house of Dr. Rogers, distinguished physician, which stood on Town House Hill, was not saved, but several articles in it were, including a silver headed cane, the gift of Governor Fitch, and the Rogers' coat of arms. Piles of black smoldering wood which represented all that remained of quaint little green and white colonial homes; ruins of mills and stores like horrid dead blotches on the fresh, green landscape; charred flower gardens; miles of burned grain fields; the useless spars of sunken ships still discernible above the waters near the docks; the prostrate bodies of dead horses and cows too slow to escape the enemy's torch; streets strewn with wreckage and debris from battle splintered homes and from the effects of the fleeing villagers; a gaunt chimney here; a metal church bell there; such was Norwalk after the passing of Tryon.

## SOLDIERS RETURN HOME

The patriot army, with the exception of a small force at West Point, was disbanded November 3, 1783, and Norwalk soldiers hurried home as fast as ever their horses or their legs could carry them. Norwalk took an active part in the Revolutionary War, a very active part, Bancroft the historian says: "Norwalk sent more men to the Revolutionary War in proportion to its population than any town in the 13 colonies." Of the companies which went to the front and of the fields on which they fought, C. F. Hallock, has the following to say, in the book, "Norwalk After 250 Years:"

"The War of the Revolution was now upon our people and from 1775 to 1783 Norwalk was well represented, for the Colonial Army in the spring of 1775, the Fifth Regiment was mainly recruited from Fairfield County, and Norwalk sent a company. The officers of this company were Capt. Matthew Mead, First Lieut. Levi Taylor, Second Lieut. William Seymour. There were a large number of the citizens of Norwalk, but we are unable from the records to obtain the names of all those who enlisted from Norwalk. This company saw very severe service during its seven months' campaign. Again in 1777 we were called upon to furnish another regiment from Fairfield county. This regiment was called the Fifth Regiment, Conn. line and in it Norwalk was again represented by nearly a whole company, who were to serve three years or during the war. This regiment saw severe service, was engaged at the battle of Germantown, October, 1777, wintered with Washington at Valley Forge, winter of 1777 and 1778; was at battle of Monmouth, June, 1778; wintered at Redding, Conn., winter of 1778 and 1779, in what is now Putnam Park. Our men in this regiment were kept constantly on the move from this time until the expiration of their term of service. We find it impossible to obtain from the records the names and the number of men from Norwalk who participated in





corner of East ave. and Fitch st., the inscription on which was given earlier in the history.

During the same year, this patriotic chapter marked the scene of the Flax Hill encounter with a granite boulder inscribed as follows: "This Rock Marks the Site of a Battle Between the Americans and the British, July 12, 1779. This Cannonball was Found on the Battlefield a Hundred Years After. By the Daughters of the American Revolution, 1896." A large British cannonball is embedded in the surface of the rock. This memorial may be found just north of Flax Hill road, in the vicinity of Hillside place, between Bayview and Elmwood aves. In 1899, a memorial marking one of the landing places of the British invaders in 1779, was set on Fitch's Point in East Norwalk by the D. A. R.

April 19, 1901, the Nathan Hale Horse Trough, to which reference was previously made, was erected and placed in front of the Armory. When the automobile replaced the horse, it was moved to the grounds of the D. A. R. home on Mill Hill. Later, a tablet was erected at the foot of Grumman's Hill, East ave., to mark the hill atop of which the British General Tryon sat and ordered the burning of Norwalk. The tablet is now about to be moved to make way for the cutting of a new road to a real estate development. Thirty-nine did duty in the old Norwalk Guard during the Revolutionary War including: Isaac Isaacs, John Platt, Lieut. Asa Hoyt, Capt. Stephen Betts, Reuben Mott, Matthew Reed, Capt. Lemuel Brooks, Jacob Jennings, Stephen Marvin, Edward Wentworth, Samuel Raymond, Aaron Adams, James Crowley, John Saunders, father and son, Seeley Squires and Commodore Cannon.

News of other Norwalk men who took part in the Revolution seems very scarce. There are three others who must be mentioned: "Captain James Richard was at the invasion of Danbury and Norwalk." "Captain Job Bartram of Norwalk was wounded at Fairfield, July 7, 1779," according to "Connecticut Men in the War of the Revolution." "Cap-

tain David Whitney offered his vessels and his self for the suffering townspeople."

Men from the vicinity of Norwalk who were shut up in prison ships, in the dungeon of the notorious Sugar House in New York, or in other enemy prisons, according to the D. A. R. records, included: Rev. Moses Mather, D. D., taken from the Darien Congregational church; John Clock, detained six months in New York; Thaddeus Bell of Middlesex, now Darien; James Bell and Joseph Mather. Col. Stephen St. John was also a prisoner for a time. It will be remembered that poor deaf Fountain Smith was taken from his pretty Norwalk home to New York, where he died in prison. Captain Seth Seymour of Norwalk was another who died wretchedly in an enemy prison and filled an unknown grave. He met his end in the Sugar House prison, a brick building some five stories high, "near the Old Middle Dutch Church," within the limits of New York city. The British literally piled their captives within the walls and there thousands of them died from improper food, lack of clothing and no medical attendance.









## FITCH II GRANTOR LAND CONNECTIONS

GRANTOR in capital letters; Grantee in small letters

### ABIJAH FITCH *-son of Mathew*

David St. John.....dated 1781  
Elijah Hoyt.....dated 1787  
Isaac S. Isaacs.....dated 1791  
Joseph Silliman.....dated 1792  
Joseph Fitch.....dated 1792  
Nathaniel Fitch.....dated 1793  
Benoni St. John.....dated 1795  
Abner Gilbert.....dated 1820  
Joseph Silliman.....dated 1824

### ANDREW FITCH

Stephen Camp.....dated 1796  
Hezekiah Lockwood...dated 1796  
Jesse Bedient.....dated 1796  
Thomas Fitch.....dated 1703  
Josiah H. Fitch.....dated 1806

### ASAHEL FITCH

Ezekiel Wood, trustee.....dated 1770  
Eliphalet Lockwood.....dated 1778  
Phinehas Hanford.....dated 1792

### BUSHNELL FITCH

Jonathan Burril.....dated 1751  
Theophilus Fitch.....dated 1769 — *brother*  
John Richards.....dated 1773  
David Comstock, Jr.....dated 1783  
Joseph Crofoot.....dated 1783  
David Comstock.....dated 1790  
Abijah Fitch.....dated 1792  
Justus Hoyt.....dated 1792  
Thomas Belden .....dated 1797

### DANIEL FITCH (1730-1788) *son of Samuel + Susannah Platt; wife Rebecca MARVIN*

Thomas Belden.....dated 1776  
Seth Betts, Jr.....dated 1810  
John H. Fitch.....dated 1829 — *desc of James who was bro of Sam. Sr.*  
Cornelia Fitch.....dated 1836  
Rebeckah Fitch.....dated 1791.....*may be an estate*  
Heir of: Henry Fitch.....dated 1799

### DAVID H. FITCH

Buckingham Lockwood.....dated 1827  
James Fitch.....dated 1827  
Lewis Fallow.....dated 1828  
George Nash.....1827.....*estate of Lewis C. Fitch, admin.*  
Samuel Hanford.....1827.....*estate of Lewis C. Fitch., admin*





EBENEZER FITCH - Desc. of Gov. Thomas

John St. John, Jr.....dated 1781  
Giles Fitch.....dated 1783  
John St. John, 3<sup>rd</sup>.....dated 1792

EDWARD FITCH

Susannah Hanford.....dated 1804.....widow  
Samuel M. Fitch.....dated 1804  
Matthias Hubbell.....dated 1838  
Daniel Fitch.....dated 1847  
Samuel M. Fitch.....dated 1847

ELIJAH FITCH

Elizabeth Fitch.....dated 1790  
Elijah Fitch, Jr.....dated 1801  
William Fitch.....dated 1802  
Eliphalet Taylor.....dated 1803  
John Chapman.....dated 1803  
Elijah Fitch, widow of.....dated 1802 - Phoebe Smith b. 1731 m. 1752

ELIZABETH FITCH

Thomas Fitch.....dated 1719/20.....Our Nathaniel's 1<sup>st</sup> wife (need maiden)  
Nathaniel Fitch.....dated 1765.....Nathaniel who died in 1766 and was  
The son of Elizabeth Beers and John Fitch. This Elizabeth was his sister.  
Josiah St. John.....dated 1790  
Moses Gregory 3<sup>rd</sup>.....dated 1796

EUNICE FITCH

Elias Betts, Estate.....dated 1785

GILES FITCH

John St. John 3<sup>rd</sup>.....dated 1784  
Jabel Sturges.....dated 1786  
John St. John 3<sup>rd</sup>.....dated 1792

HANNAH FITCH

Eliphalet Lockwood.....dated 1778  
Phinehas Hanford.....dated 1792  
Eliphalet Lockwood.....dated 1793.....widow of  
Charlotte St. John.....dated 1816  
Isaac Church.....dated 1817  
Isaac Betts.....dated 1817  
Robert Cameron.....dated 1827

HARVEY FITCH - Son of Daniel, grandson of Samuel Fitch & Olive Stuart

Algernon E. Beard.....dated 1851 - married A Mallory  
David Comstock, Jr.....dated 1852  
William Daskam.....dated 1852  
Henry Guthrie.....dated 1856  
Edward Dunn.....dated 1856  
Gershom Smith,.....dated 1848.....Conservator for Cyrus Fitch

HAYNES FITCH (1734-1815) married to Anna Cooke (moved to Ohio)





David Coley, Jr.....dated 1792  
 James Fitch.....dated 1793  
 Hannah Smith.....dated 1797  
 Elias Sturges.....dated 1799  
 Lewis Clark Fitch.....dated 1799  
 Josiah Church.....dated 1799  
 Hezekiah Hanford, Jr.....dated 1799  
 Thaddeus Betts.....dated 1799  
 Hutton Smith.....dated 1799  
 James Fitch, Jr.....dated 1800  
 Hez. Hanford, Jr.....dated 1800  
 Josiah Hanford Fitch.....dated 1800  
 Elijah Fitch, Jr.....dated 1800  
 Elijah Gregory.....dated 1800  
 Samuel Cannon.....dated 1800  
 Josiah St. John.....dated 1800  
 Samuel Gibbs.....dated 1800  
 Samuel Gruman.....dated 1792.....Executor, estate John Benedict

#### HEZEKIAH FITCH

Edmund Tuttle.....dated 1827  
 Josiah Gregory.....dated 1827

#### HORACE FITCH

Lewis Fitch.....dated 1847  
 George A. Raymond.....dated 1855

#### JABEZ FITCH (1751 -

John St. John 3<sup>rd</sup>.....dated 1783 - 1792  
 Jabel Sturges.....dated 1786 - 1794

#### JAMES FITCH (James #1 1702 bro. of Gov.) (James II - no dates) (James #III (1758-1828)

Joseph Ketchum.....dated 1731  
 Elizabeth Raymond.....dated 1736/37  
 Town of Norwalk.....1737.....Sand for Highway  
 Samuel Fitch.....dated 1741 - prob. SAM I, bro of Gov. (1698-1787)  
 Nathan Nash.....dated 1741  
 Joseph St. John.....dated 1741/42  
 William Buckingham.....dated 1742/43  
 Samuel Ketchum.....dated 1744  
 Hanford Haynes.....dated 1749  
 Samuel Marvin, Jr.....dated 1753  
 Haynes Fitch.....dated 1751 - (1734-1815) m. HANNAH COOKE, son of James #1  
 James Fitch, Jr.....dated 1774 bro of " #2  
 Hannah Smith.....dated 1797  
 James Fitch, Jr. ....dated 1798  
 Clark Fitch.....dated 1800  
 Rulette Fitch.....dated 1810  
 Lewis C. Fitch.....dated 1812  
 John H. Fitch .....dated 1819  
 Stephen Fitch.....dated 1826  
 Hezekiah Jarvis.....dated 1790.....Estate of Dan'l Fitch  
 Barnabas Mervine.....dated 1790.....estate of Daniel Fitch



Rebeckah Fitch.....dated 1791.....estate of Daniel Fitch  
William Clark.....dated 1829.....estate  
Rebecca Nash.....dated 1829.....estate  
Daniel Fitch.....dated 1829.....estate  
Mary Ann Day, heirs of.....dated 1829  
Jonah C. Keeler.....dated 1832  
John Fitch.....dated 1846  
John H. Fitch.....dated 1846  
Mary Ann Day.....dated 1846  
Julia Fitch.....dated 1846

#### JAMES FITCH, JR.

Jonathan Camp.....dated 1794  
Ebenezer D. Hoyt.....dated 1801  
Hutton Smith.....dated 1807  
Esther Fitch.....dated 1812.....lease  
John H. Fitch.....dated 1816

#### JAMES B. FITCH

Benjamin Fillow.....dated 1852

#### JOHN FITCH

Samuel Betts.....dated 1695  
Thomas Reed.....dated 1701  
Samuel Couch.....dated 1713/14  
John Taylor.....dated 1717/18  
Ebenezer Gregory.....dated 1722/23  
Thomas Betts.....dated 1722/23  
James Lockwood.....dated 1722/23  
Nathaniel Fitch.....dated 1723  
David Monrow.....dated 1723/24  
Daniel St. John, Jr.....dated 1723/24  
Thomas Bouton.....dated 1724  
Samuel Kellogg.....dated 1724  
Samuel Grumon.....dated 1724  
Samuel Raymond.....dated 1725  
Nathaniel Fitch.....dated 1731/32  
Ebenezer Carter .....dated 1731/32  
Matthew Fitch.....dated 1737  
Theophilus Fitch .....dated 1737  
Elizabeth and David King.....dated 1768 .....Sister and bro-in-law  
James Fillio.....dated 1787.....the person he sold his homestead  
Land to before leaving for PA  
Esaius Bouton.....dated 1794.....Prob the sale of John, son of Theo  
Before he left for New York

#### JOHN FITCH, SR.

Thomas Fitch Jr.....dated 1695  
Thomas Reed.....dated 1700  
Edmon Warin.....dated 1706  
Thomas Fitch.....dated 1708/09  
Thomas Fitch.....dated 1711  
John Fitch, Jr.....dated 1713/14





Nathaniel Fitch.....dated 1713/14  
Daniel Raymond.....dated 1737  
Sam. Raymond, Jr.....dated 1737

#### JOHN FITCH, JR.

Thomas Fitch, Jr.....dated 1695  
John Keeler, Jr.....dated 1709/10  
John Edwards.....dated 1712  
John Raymond, Capt.....dated 1713/14  
Matthew Seamer.....dated 1717-18  
Joseph St. John.....dated 1718/19  
Jedidiah Canfield.....dated 1720/21  
Thomas Fitch .....dated 1722/23  
Samuel Kellogg.....dated 1722

#### JOSEPH FITCH

Marke Sention.....dated 1657  
Theophilus Fitch.....dated 1784  
Isaac Richards.....dated 1789  
Theophilus Fitch.....dated 1791  
Samuel M. Fitch.....dated 1804  
Susanna Hanford.....dated 1804  
Jabez Raymond.....dated 1817

#### JOSEPH PLATT FITCH

Elias Betts Estate.....dated 1785  
Samuel Fitch, Sr.....dated 1794  
Ebenezer H. Smith .....dated 1818

#### LEWIS C. FITCH

Esther Fitch.....dated 1812  
Daniel Nash.....dated 1820  
Stephen B. St. John.....dated 1820  
Buckingham Lockwood...dated 1820  
Nancy Benedict.....dated 1820  
Susannah Chapman.....dated 1820  
Ruletta Fitch.....dated 1820  
Samuel Marvin.....dated 1820  
Thomas Benedict.....dated 1821  
Josiah Raymond, Jr.....dated 1823  
Ebenezer Smith.....dated 1823  
Gershom Smith.....dated 1823  
Alford Mallory.....dated 1824  
John H. Fitch.....dated 1825  
George Nash.....dated 1825  
John Sturges.....dated 1825  
John B. Bennett .....dated 1826  
George Nash.....dated 1827.....Estate  
Samuel Hanford.....dated 1827.....Estate  
Buckingham Lockwood...dated 1827.....heir of  
James Fitch.....dated 1827.....heir of





## LUCY FITCH

Hiel Cook.....dated 1823

## LIDIA FITCH

John Edwards.....1712

Nathan Bears.....1742

James Olmstead.....dated 1743

John Darrow.....dated 1749

Joseph Waring.....dated 1786

John Fitch.....dated 1794.....mother, wife of Theop., to son John before  
His migration to New York State.

Stephen Betts.....dated 1801

John St. John 3<sup>rd</sup>.....dated 1792.....widow of Ebenezer Fitch

## LINDALL FITCH (LYNDALL, LYNDOLL, LYNDEL, LINDEL, LINDAL, LINDAL)

Elisha Alvord.....dated 1743

Matthew Fitch.....dated 1743/44

Hanford Haynes.....dated 1749

Jonas Seeley.....dated 1751

John Bartlet.....dated 1752

John Sanders.....dated 1762

Ebenezer Smith.....dated 1764

Seymore Fitch.....dated 1765

Matthew Fitch, Jr.....dated 1769

William Johnson.....dated 1765

Jacob Selleck.....dated 1767.....prob son-in-law, married Hannah

Seymore Fitch.....dated 1771-73

Aaron St. John.....dated 1790

Matthew Hoyt, Jr.....dated 1800

Matthew Fitch, Jr.....dated 1774.....Estate

David Hoyt.....dated 1774.....Estate

David Hoyt, Jr.....dated 1774.....Estate

## MARY FITCH

William Buckingham.....dated 1742/43

Phineas Hanford.....dated 1743

Elisha Alvord.....dated 1743

Thomas Fitch.....dated 1744

Haynes Hanford.....dated 1749.....wife of James

Haynes Hanford.....dated 1749.....wife of Lindel

Haynes Hanford.....dated 1750

Jonas Seeley.....dated 1751

John Bartlett.....dated 1752

John Sanders.....dated 1762

Robert Silliman.....dated 1763

Ebenezer Smith.....dated 1764

James Fitch, jr.....dated 1774

Seymore Fitch.....dated 1782 and 84

Enos Kellogg.....dated 1784

James Fitch.....dated 1827.....widow

## MARY E. FITCH

Stephen Camp.....dated 1796



Hezekiah Lockwood.....dated 1796  
Jesse Bedient.....dated 1796  
Richard H. Fitch.....dated 1796

#### MATTHEW FITCH

Nathan Bears.....dated 1742  
James Olmstead.....dated 1743  
Lyndoll Fitch.....dated 1743/44  
John Darrow.....dated 1749  
John Benedict, Jr.....dated 1754  
Josiah St. John.....dated 1772  
Nathan Fitch .....dated 1773 .....prob to his son, Nathan  
David St. John.....dated 1781  
Hezekiah St. John.....dated 1783  
Abijah Fitch.....dated 1783.....prob. son, Abijah  
Andrew Powers.....dated 1784.....dated of recording  
James Birchard.....dated 1787  
Peter St. John, Jr.....dated 1790  
Abijah Fitch.....dated 1791/81/82 .....heirs of

#### MATTHEW FITCH, SR.

Matthew Fitch, Jr.....dated 1772

#### NATHAN FITCH

Elijah Hoyt.....dated 1765  
Samuel Hoyt.....dated 1765  
Aaron Keeler.....dated 1771  
Jacob Richards.....dated 1781  
Jeremiah Beard Ells.....dated 1784  
Elijah Hoyt.....dated 1784  
John Hoyt 3<sup>rd</sup>.....dated 1784  
Lydia Hoyt.....dated 1784  
Abijah Fitch.....dated 1785  
Lemuel Brooks.....dated 1818

#### NATHANIEL FITCH

John Raymond.....dated 1713/14  
Thomas Fitch.....dated 1719/20  
Samuel Raymond.....dated 1720  
Ebenezer Gregory.....dated 1722/23  
Benjamin Scribner.....dated 1722/23  
Thomas Betts.....dated 1722/23  
James Lockwood.....dated 1722/23  
John Fitch.....dated 1723  
John Raymond.....dated 1723/24  
Anthony Batterson .....dated 1724/25  
John Beears.....dated 1724/25  
Thomas Betts.....dated 1725  
Thomas Fitch, Sr.....dated 1726  
John Beers.....dated 1728/29  
Jonathan Camp.....dated 1730  
Thomas Benedict, Jr.....dated 1730  
John Fitch.....dated 1731/32





David Sherwood.....dated 1731/32  
 Samuel Coley.....dated 1733/34  
 Hezekiah Whitne.....dated 1733/34  
 Ralph Isaacs.....dated 1736  
 Samuel Raymond, Sr.....dated 1737  
 Jabez Crain.....dated 1739  
 Lindal Fitch.....dated 1739  
 John Fitch.....dated 1742  
 John Belden.....dated 1742  
 Nathan Nash.....dated 1742  
 Andrew Powers.....dated 1799  
 Elisha Alvord.....dated 1743.....children & heirs of  
 John Partrick.....dated 1746 .....heirs of  
 Daniel Bradley.....dated 1746 .....heirs of  
 Phineas Hanford.....dated 1746.....heirs of  
 John Finch.....dated 1769.....heirs of

#### OLIVE FITCH

Stephen Keeler.....dated 1801

#### PHEBE FITCH

Elijah Fitch, .....dated 1802.....widow of Elijah Fitch  
 James B. Fitch.....dated 1852 .....heir of

#### REBECKAH FITCH

Henry Fitch.....dated 1796

#### RHODA FITCH

John Platt.....dated 1719

#### RICHARD H. FITCH

Smith Hutton.....dated 1801  
 Stephen Lockwood.....dated 1802  
 Ebenezer Church.....dated 1803  
 Susanna Hanford, widow...dated 1804  
 James Smith, Jr.....dated 1807

#### RULETTE FITCH

Ebenezer D. Hoyt.....dated 1801  
 Lewis C. Fitch.....dated 1825  
 John H. Fitch.....dated 1829  
 John Partrick.....dated 1832

#### SAMUEL FITCH

James Fitch.....dated 1731  
 Thomas Fitch.....dated 1739  
 Daniel Fitch.....dated 1767- 1772 – 1774  
 Jonathan Fitch.....dated 1772  
 Samuel Fitch, Jr.....dated 1775  
 Joseph Platt Fitch.....dated 1792  
 Moses Rogers.....dated 1795  
 Cyrus Fitch.....dated 1812 – 1820  
 Estate of Samuel Fitch .....dated 1788 and 1789





Josiah Raymond  
Samuel Mervine, Jr.  
James Smith  
David Bennet  
Robert Waters  
Rebeckah Fitch  
Hezekiah Hanford  
Jospeh Platt Fitch

Same names are given as estate in book 16 and 17 (perhaps is was just repeated)

#### SAMUEL FITCH SR.

Samuel Fitch, Jr.....dated 1757  
Samuel Fitch, Jr.....dated 1797

#### SAMUEL FITCH, JR.

Simeon Stuart.....dated 1759  
Phineas Hanford.....dated 1791  
Samuel Fitch, Sr.....dated 1794  
Moses Gregory.....dated 1796  
John Cannon Estate.....dated 1797  
Stephen Keeler.....dated 1801  
Stephen Keeler.....dated 1796.....estate of Mary Stuart

#### SALLY OR SARAH FITCH

Cannon LeGrand.....dated 1813, 1823  
Nathan Jarvis.....dated 1811  
Betsey Gregory.....dated 1812  
Amelia Newkirk.....dated 1824  
Daniel Fitch.....dated 1850

#### SEYMORE FITCH

William Lucas.....dated 1765  
Charles Ward Apthorp.....dated 1771  
Matthew Fitch, Jr.....dated 1774  
Matthew Fitch.....dated 1782 -83  
Aaron St. John.....dated 1783  
William Hoyt.....dated 1784  
Matthew Fitch.....dated 1785  
Jacob Selleck.....dated 1786  
Samuel Hutton.....dated 1785  
John Hickock.....dated 1786  
Jacob Jennings.....dated 1788  
John Cannon.....dated 1789  
Elijah Hoyt.....dated 1801  
Matthew Hoyt, Jr. ....dated 1801  
Matthew Fitch, Jr.....dated 1774.....estate of Lindal Fitch  
David Hoyt  
David Hoyt Jr.  
Matthew Hoyt, Jr.....dated 1801.....estate

#### SEYMORE FITCH, SR.

Lindall Fitch.....dated 1788  
Lindall Fitch.....dated 1788



#### SEYMORE FITCH, JR.

Aaron St. John.....dated 1790

#### STEPHEN FITCH

Stephen Fillio.....dated 1787  
Azor Belden, 2<sup>nd</sup>.....dated 1788  
Isaac Betts, Jr.....dated 1788  
Thomas Belden.....dated 1792  
Abijah Fitch.....dated 1702  
Ebenezer Carter.....dated 1795  
Bushnell Fitch.....dated 1797  
Hezekiah Whitlock.....dated 1818  
Maria Preston.....dated 1820  
James Fitch.....dated 1824  
Buckingham Lockwood.....dated 1836  
Daniel Fitch.....dated 1836  
Chapman Smith.....dated 1836  
Cornelia H. Price.....dated 1854

#### SUSANNAH FITCH

Mary Ann Day.....dated 1829 = 1836  
John Smith.....dated 1839  
George B. Fitch.....dated 1846  
John H. Fitch.....dated 1846  
Mary Ann Day.....dated 1846  
Hiram Fitch.....dated 1854

#### THEOPHILUS FITCH

Robert Silliman.....dated 1746  
Bushnell Fitch.....dated 1752  
John Fitch .....dated 1757 or 67  
Josiah St. John .....dated 1772  
John Fitch.....dated 1773  
Aaron Comstock.....dated 1781  
Seth Betts, Jr.....dated 1818  
Mathew Fitch, Jr.....dated 1774.....from estate of Lindall Fitch  
    David Hoyt  
    David Hoyt, Jr.....dated 1774.....all from estate of Lindal Fitch

THOMAS FITCH (too many to copy all so will do just the ones I am sure pertains to the Family. The Thomas's were busy men.

Ebenezer Sention.....dated 1700  
Nathaniel Fitch.....dated 1719/20  
James Fitch.....dated 1731  
James Fitch.....dated 1744  
Ebenezer Fitch.....dated 1758  
Samuel Mervine Fitch.....dated 1802

#### THOMAS FITCH, SR.

Edward Church.....dated 1655  
Thomas Fitch, Jr.....dated 1671





John Fitch.....dated 1683  
Thomas Fitch, Jr.....dated 1724  
Samuel Fitch..... no date but around 1725  
Samuel Fitch.....dated 1728/29  
James Fitch.....dated 1728/29  
Thomas Fitch, Jr.....dated 1763  
Elizabeth Raymond.....dated 1736/37.....heirs of , div. of sand

#### THOMAS FITCH, JR.

Thomas Taylor.....1672  
Samuel Sention.....1672  
John Fitch.....1695  
John Reed, Sr.....1698

#### TIMOTHY FITCH

John Hanford.....dated 1794  
Benjamin Stuart.....dated 1795  
Seth Betts.....dated 1798  
Azor Belden.....dated 1798 and 1815  
Andrew Hanford.....dated 1804  
Charles Wright.....dated 1818  
Obadiah Wright.....dated 1819  
Samuel Gibbs.....dated 1803.....estate  
Miss Susanna Hanford.....dated 1804.....heirs of estate  
Andrew Hanford.....dated 1804  
Jabez Raymond.....dated 1804  
Joseph Miles.....dated 1806  
Jabez Raymond.....dated 1817.....more heirs of  
Ebenezer H. Smith.....dated 1817  
George F. Belden.....dated 1823

#### TIMOTHY FITCH SR.

John J. Ketchum.....dated 1802  
Jabez Raymond.....dated 1804.....heir of

#### TIMOTHY FITCH, JR. .

Jabez Raymond.....dated 1804

#### TIMOTHY B. FITCH

Henry I. Hoyt.....dated 1852  
William K. or H. James.....dated 1855

#### WAKEMAN FITCH

Seth Smith.....dated 1836

#### WALTER J. FITCH

Lyman Knapp.....dated 1844  
Henry N. Hout.....dated 1845  
Moses Byxbee.....dated 1846  
St. Paul's church.....dated 1855

#### WILLIAM FITCH





Jabez Raymond.....dated 1804  
Josiah Raymond, Jr.....dated 1807  
Ebenezer H. Smith.....dated 1810  
John Chapman.....dated 1812  
Jabez Raymond.....dated 1817  
Jonathan Fitch.....dated 1817  
Ebenezer H. Smith.....dated 1817

WILLIAM H. SMITH (possibly A)

Charlotte St. John.....dated 1816  
Isaac Church.....dated 1817  
Isaac Betts.....dated 1817

WILLIAM S. FITCH

Ebenezer Gruman.....dated 1839  
Benjamin Fillow 2<sup>nd</sup>.....dated 1841  
John P. Downs.....dated 1850  
Phebe Fillow.....dated 1852

ZACHARIAH FITCH

Matthew Middlebrooks.....dated 1811

ZACHARIAH W. FITCH

Betsey Gregory.....dated 1812 and 1813  
Nancy Finney.....dated 1827  
Sarah Fitch.....dated 1832



## FITCH CONNECTIONS LAND-DEEDS LIST

**GRANTEE** is in capital letters; **Grantor** in small letters

### ABIJAH FITCH son of Matthew

Joseph Smit 1734-1784 wife Eunice Williams ( Lockwoods) Execution, 1780  
Isaac Kellogg brother-in-law (married to Hannah Fitch, Abijah's sister)  
Eliakim Reed brother-in-law, married to Rebecca, Abijah's sister  
Joseph Crofoot  
Stephen St. John  
Enos Kellogg brother-in-law, married to Lydia, Abijah's sister.  
Samuel Benedict, Jr.  
Matthew Fitch.....son, or brother  
Jacob Richards  
Nathan Fitch.....brother  
Moses C. Ells  
Bushnel Fitch.....Uncle  
Isaac G. Isaacs Relationship through St. John's by marriage to Ann Fitch  
Stephen Fitch Cousin, son of Uncle Bushnell Fitch  
Timothy Hoyt  
Frederick Hoyt  
Lois Staples

### ANN E. FITCH

Henry I. Hoyt Henry is listed as grantor to Ann E. Fitch. He is married to an Anna but do not see her connected to the Fitch family. Perhaps Just a person that she was purchasing from and not a relative.

### ANN PLATT FITCH Married to Josiah Hanford, whose father was Jonathan??

Jonathan Fitch Possible father-in-law  
Hezekiah Hanford, Jr. Married to Sarah Fitch, daughter of James II

### ANNA P. FITCH

Elijah Gregory Elijah's mother was Mary Fitch, daughter of John I and Rebecca  
Though the date of 1817 may be too late for this connection.

### BUSHNELL FITCH (1711-1815)

Theophilus Fitch Brother  
Epenetus Kellogg 1719-1774  
Asa Hoyt  
Jesup Blackleach Don't see an obvious connection  
1770 Esther Kellogg  
1790 David Comstock  
1797 Stephen Fitch Stephen is the son of Busnell

### CLARK FITCH

James Fitch

### CORNELIA FITCH Prb. Wife of Stephen Fitch, son of James III

Walter Hoyt, Estate Names a son Walter, so perhaps this was her father  
Abby J. Hoyt Abby Bouton b. 1790, married a Walter Hoyt mo & fa??  
David Roberts  
Daniel Fitch





CORNELIA H. FITCH     Daughter of Cornelia and Stephen  
Henry N. Hoyt

DANIEL FITCH (1730-1788) son of Samuel Fitch & Susannah Platt, wife: Rebecca Marvin  
Samuel Fitch .....deed date 1767.....  
Samuel Fitch.....deed date 1772  
Samuel Fitch .....deed date 1774  
Jehiel Ketchum ....deed date 1776.....brother-in-law, and wife of sister, Sarah  
Jonathan Fitch .....deed date 1822.....brother of Daniel  
James Fitch Estate 1829  
James Mallory 1835  
Stephen Fitch 1836  
John Mallory 1841  
John Mallory Estate 1847  
Henry Fitch .....deed date 1847 .....brother of Daniel  
Edward Fitch 1847  
William Clark 1848  
Sarah Fitch 1850  
John H. Fitch .....deed date 1851 .....Descendant of James, bro. of Samuel Sr.  
Samuel M. Fitch.....deed date 1851 .....Samuel Marvin brother of Daniel  
Ezra Hoyt 1852

DAVID H. FITCH (there is a David, son of Jonathan Fitch & Anne Caulkins) born 1769  
Stephen St. John.....deed date 1827  
William Lockwood.....administrator.....1827.....estate of Lewis Clark Fitch  
Lewis Clark Fitch (b. 1771) was grandson of James I, son of Thomas

EBENEZER FITCH (Ebenezer is a descendant of Gov. Thomas Fitch)  
Thomas Fitch.....deed date 1758

EDWARD FITCH  
Samuel M. Fitch.....deed date 1832 (prob. Samuel Marvin, bro of Daniel above) or  
Son Samuel M. (1800-1854) Father died in 1820 it looks like.  
Matthias Hubbell.....deed date 1837....

ELIJAH FITCH  
Phebe Fitch, widow.....deed date 1802.....prob Elijah son of James I, and wife was  
Phoebe Smith, born about 1731 and married 1752. Have no death date for Elijah.  
But probably the land contracts give us a close date. See Elijah, Jr's deeds

ELIJAH FITCH, JR.  
Haynes Fitch.....deed dated 1800.....  
Samuel Gregory.....deed dated 1800.....  
Elijah Fitch.....deed dated 1801.....this is probably the father  
Elijah Fitch.....deed dated 1802.....probably the father shortly before his death  
(by this assume the father died between Jan. 2, 1802 and June 1, 1802)

ELIZABETH FITCH  
Isaac Sherwood.....deed dated 1753  
Elijah Fitch.....deed dated 1790

EMELINE E. FITCH

... died date 1777  
... died date 1777

... died date 1777  
... died date 1777

... died date 1777  
... died date 1777

... died date 1777  
... died date 1777

... died date 1777

... died date 1777  
... died date 1777

... died date 1777  
... died date 1777

... died date 1777  
... died date 1777

... died date 1777  
... died date 1777



Zachariah W. Fitch....deed dated 1827.....have 2 Zachs, born 1771 and 1776 and  
They are descendants of Samuel Fitch and Susannah Platt

#### ESTHER FITCH

Jonathan Camp.....deed dated 1794 and 1807.....Jonathan II had a dau. Esther  
Who married a James Fitch III  
James Fitch, Jr.....deed dated 1812  
Lewis C. Fitch.....deed dated 1812.....May be an uncle-in-law  
Henry Fitch.....deed dated 1829

#### GEORGE FITCH

Lewis Fitch.....deed dated 1849

GEORGE B. FITCH (1817- ) Son of John H. Fitch also son of James III and Esther Camp  
Samuel M. Fitch.....deed dated 1841.....(1800-1854) Father Samuel M. died  
In 1820.

Julia Fitch.....deed dated 1846.....daughter of James III and Esther Camp  
Susannah Fitch....deed dated 1846 .....daughter of James III and Esther Camp  
Ezra Hoyt .....deed dated 1851  
Albert Hyatt .....deed dated 1854  
William Clark.....deed dated 1854  
Mary Ann Day.....deed dated 1855 married to Absalom Day. She was Mary Ann  
Fitch, daughter of James Fitch III and Esther Camp.

#### GILES FITCH

Ebenezer Fitch.....deed dated 1783 or 88 Giles and Ebenezer are brothers, sons of  
Ebenezer, Sr. and Lydia Mills

#### HANFORD FITCH

Jonathan Fitch Estate.....dated 1792

#### HANNAH FITCH

Hezekiah Lockwood.....dated 1816

HARVEY FITCH (OR HARRY) (son of Daniel, who is son of Samuel Fitch & Olive Stewart)  
Born 1816

Algernois Beard.....dated 1851 .....Algernon E. Beard married a Mallory  
David Comstock, Jr.....dated 1852  
Norwalk Cem. Assn.....dated 1869

HAYNES FITCH (1734-1815) married to Anna Cooke (moved to Ohio)

James Fitch.....dated 1771  
Caleb Hoyt.....dated 1773  
Abraham Benedict....dated 1786  
Asahel Hooker.....dated 1786  
Samuel Grumman....dated 1792  
Samuel Cannon.....dated 1804

#### HENRY FITCH

Rebeckah Fitch.....dated 1796  
Jonathan Fitch.....dated 1799  
Samuel M. Fitch.....dated 1802  
Andrew Hanford.....dated 1804



Jonathan Fitch.....dated 1819  
Lewis C. Fitch .....dated 1820  
Samuel M. Fitch.....dated 1829  
James Mallory .....dated 1846

#### HEZEKIAH FITCH

Zachariah W. Fitch.....dated 1827

#### HIRAM FITCH (1826-1902)

John H. Fitch.....dated 1853.....prob father of Hiram  
Julia Fitch.....dated 1854 .....1800-1857 was aunt, bro. of John H. prob.

#### HULDAH A. FITCH

Isaac Church.....dated 1853  
John Baker.....dated 1855

#### JABEZ FITCH (1751-

Ebenezer Fitch .....dated 1783 Ebenezer was Jabez's father (1728-1762) or his  
Brother, born 1755. More likely as father was dead before 1783. Desc of  
Gov. Thomas Fitch.  
Jab??? Sturges .....dated 1786

#### JAMES FITCH (#1 bro of Gov. 1702- ) (James II – no dates) James III (1758-1828)

Thomas Fitch, Sr.....dated 1728/29.....Thomas III (1665-1731) Father of James I  
And of the Gov.  
Joseph Ketchum.....dated 1731.....  
Samuel Fitch.....dated 1731 ..... Sam. #1, 1698-1787 bro. of Gov,  
Elizabeth Raymond.....dated 1736  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1737  
Samuel Fitch .....dated 1737.....  
James Brown.....dated 1737/8 .....  
Nathan Betts.....dated 1738  
Josiah Thatcher.....dated 1741.....bro-in-law, husband of sister, Mary  
Thomas Fitch.....dated 1744  
Hannah Hanford.....dated 1762.....estate of John Bartlett

#### JAMES FITCH, JR. (James II – no dates) ( James III 1758-1828)

James Fitch.....dated 1772  
Fitch Rogers Estate...dated 1774.....1748 -1828.....son of Elizabeth Fitch and  
Nehemiah Rogers  
James Fitch.....dated 1798  
Anna Fitch.....dated 1800  
Haynes Fitch.....dated 1801.....1734-1815 m. Hannah Cooke, son of James 1,  
Brother of James II  
Josiah H. Fitch.....dated 1805.....may be Josiah Hooker Fitch, son of Haynes  
Josiah Hanford Fitch...dated 1806.....1772-1845....son of Jonathan, g son of Samuel  
And Susanna Platt  
Hutton Smith.....dated 1811  
James Fitch.....dated 1812  
Andrew Hanford.....dated 1813  
John Chapman.....dated 1813 .....born 1757.....m. Susanna Fitch, dau of  
James II and Ann Hanford





JAMES B. FITCH James Benjamin (b. 1826- ) Desc. of James about 6 generations. Son  
of Smith Fitch and Phebe Fillio  
Gregory F. Fitch.....dated 1852

JOHN FITCH (John I 1633- abt 1714) (John II 1677-abt 1760) (John III abt 1710-1748  
Son of Nathaniel m. Eliz Beers) (John IV 1737-1815 in PA) (John V abt 1767-1792)

Nathaniel Richards Estate.....dated 1682.....John I's father-in-law  
Thomas Fitch, Sr.....dated 1683.....(Thomas 1612-1704)  
Samuel Betts.....dated 1695.....b. 1660 son of settler, Thos. Betts  
Thomas Fitch, Jr. ....dated 1695.....must be Thomas III as his father  
Died in 1684 so would already be dead. Another place that shows the person  
Called "Jr" does not necessarily need to be the son of the one called "Sr."  
Nathaniel Fitch.....dated 1723.....Our Nathaniel (1682-1743) bro of  
John II  
David Manrow.....dated 1723 ...  
Nathaniel Fitch.....dated 1731.....to bro John or son John  
Ebenezer Carter.....dated 1731.....1697-1775 lived at Canaan  
Nathaniel Fitch.....dated 1742.....  
Theophilus Fitch.....dated 1767 ..... (1709-1783) prob. to John his son (b.  
1740  
David King.....dated 1768.....brother-in-law to John IV – our John  
Theophilus Fitch.....dated 1773.....prob. to son John, b. 1840  
Enos Kellogg.....dated 1792.....m. Lydia Fitch, Matthew's daughter  
Jacob Selleck.....dated 1792.....Jacob is said to have married a  
Hannah Fitch, a Sarah Fitch, and in another place a Susanna Fitch. Is it  
Possible that he married Susanna, daughter of Mathew and Lydia. In this  
List right here we have Enos Kellogg who married Lydia, dau of Matthew.  
And then note the following:  
Lydia Fitch.....dated 1794.....this would probably be the wife of  
John II who lived in New Canaan and the John is probably the son of Theo  
As he would be a grandson. No other John's in that line are living as far as  
I know. Think we will also find that John, son of Theo, sold out and moved  
To New York about this time. Check the list of grants by John Fitches to  
Others on that date.  
Burr Keeler.....dated 1848

JOHN FITCH, SR. ....(1633- 1714 approx.) Wife Rebecca Lindall  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1705  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1706  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1708/9  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1709/10  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1709/10  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1709/10  
Nathaniel Selleck.....dated 1710/11.....do not have much on Nathaniel. He was  
One of the earlier settlers in Norwalk

JOHN FITCH, JR.....(1677-1748 to 60) Wife was Lydia Bushnell  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1705  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1706  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1709  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1709/10  
John Fitch, Sr.....dated 1713/14.....prob. his father John, Sr.





Joseph St. John.....dated 1718/19.....(1664-1731) had a son Joseph b. 1703  
 Was married to a Sarah Betts  
 John Marvin.....dated 1721/11.....1678-1774 possibly married Rachel  
 St. John  
 Richard Patrick.....dated 1735/36  
 John Beers.....dated 1737.....1695-1761 married Martha Monrow  
 Had a son named John born 1720, was listed as a neighbor of Nathaniel Fitch  
 (By the time we get to 1737 it is possible that John Jr. may have been the son  
 of Nathaniel rather than John (b. 1677) This contract would have been past  
 the time of the death of the elder John b: 1633 which was about 1714. Most  
 of these listed as Jr. should be considered with that in mind. John Beers  
 would have been an Uncle to Elizabeth Beers who married John Fitch 1710  
 to 1748. In fact this would have been the year our John of PA had been born  
 so this may have been their first homestead that they are buying from Uncle  
 John Beers. Need to read this contract.

JOHN H. FITCH.....Son of James III and Esther Camp. (1795-1828)  
 James Fitch, Jr.....dated 1816.....may be his father. John would be 21  
 Lewis C. Fitch.....dated 1825.....b. 1771 an uncle, brother to his father  
 George A. Raymond....dated 1826.....(1807-1888) son of Sarah (Fitch) Raymond  
 Sarah was the daughter of Timothy and Esther  
 Dennis Hanford.....dated 1829 .....may be son of Elnathan  
 Daniel Fitch.....dated 1829.....perhaps the one born 1784 son of Sam and  
 Olive. There were 3 listed about this time.  
 Rulette Fitch.....dated 1829.....1762-1848.....dau. of James II & Ann H.  
 Believe this to be a female who never married  
 John B. Bennett .....dated 1830 ...  
 George Smith .....dated 1831  
 William M. Raymond...dated 1842.....  
 George Day.....dated 1846.....  
 Richard Sammis.....dated 1851  
 William Clark.....dated 1852  
 Willint H. Bengner .....dated 1856  
 Mary Esther, Kesler....dated 1846

JONATHAN FITCH .....Many Jonathan's fit into this category of date range  
 Samuel Fitch.....dated 1772  
 Rebeckah Fitch.....dated 1776 .....one married Henry Betts, below.....dau of  
 Daniel Fitch and Rebecca Marvin though she wasn't born until 1771. Must  
 Be others at that time too. Daniel and Rebecca had a son, Jonathon born  
 1777 too.  
 Rebeckah Betts .....dated 1802..... Henry Betts m. Rebecca Fitch 1794  
 Town of Norwalk.....dated 1805  
 Josiah H. Fitch.....dated 1807.....J.H. had a father Jonathan who died in 1773  
 But he also had a sister named Rebecca. Prob. Josiah Hanford Fitch.  
 Henry Betts.....dated 1809.....poss one born 1766  
 Town of Norwalk.....dated 1815  
 James Smith .....dated 1815  
 William Fitch.....dated 1817  
 Phinehas Miller.....dated 1819  
 Matthew Smith.....date 1773.....Heir of

JONATHAN FITCH 2<sup>ND</sup>.....



Josiah H. Fitch.....dated 1816.....(1772-1845) Josiah H. had a son Jonathan  
Born 1795 making him 21 at this date

JOSEPH FITCH.....date 1651.....from the Indians....must be 1<sup>st</sup> Joseph here  
In Norwalk with his brother Thomas

Thaddeus Benedict.....date 1784 .....many Benedicts got land from Joseph. Can't  
Find the connection as yet, but there probably is one. Either relatives or  
Neighbors. Samuel, Hezekiah, and John are other Benedicts named.

Abijah Fitch.....dated 1792 .....prob. Abijah son of Matthew. If so this  
Joseph may be a son of Theophilus and the area would be New Canaan.

JOSEPH PLATT FITCH.....1753-1797.....son of Samuel Fitch & Eliz. Platt  
Samuel Fitch .....dated 1790.....Estate probably of grandfather d: 1787  
Samuel Fitch.....dated 1792.....Perhaps father, Samuel

JOSIAH H. FITCH .....prob. Josiah Hanford Fitch 1772-1845, though there was also a  
Josiah Hooker Fitch about the same time. Don't know if he lived or not.

Andrew Hanford.....dated 1804 a son of Daniel and Susanna Platt b: 1779  
Andrew Fitch.....dated 1806  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1814  
Jonathan Fitch 2<sup>nd</sup>.....dated 1817

JOSIAH HANFORD FITCH.....1771-1845  
Matthew Smith .....dated 1773 .....wonder if the date is correct on this one?? If  
He was born 1771 this is too early for the Josiah Hanford Fitch we have here.  
Moses Raymond.....dated 1796  
Stephen St. John.....dated 1799  
Haynes Fitch.....dated 1800..... 1734-1815 moved to Ohio about 1806  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1802  
Samuel Hanford.....dated 1814

JULIA FITCH  
George Day.....dated 1846

LEWIS FITCH.....son of Josiah Hanford Fitch & Ann Platt (1802-1891)  
Josiah N. Fitch estate....dated 1846.....his father died in 1845 "N" prob "H"  
Samuel Daskam.....dated 1847.....uncle Samuel, married sister Lucretia  
Nancy Hoyt.....dated 1847 .....sister, married Francis Hoyt  
Horace Fitch.....dated 1847.....brother, Horace b: 1811  
George Fitch.....dated 1852.....brother, George b: 1809

LEWIS C. FITCH.....prob Lewis Clark Fitch b: 1771 son of James and Esther

James Fitch.....dated 1812  
Samuel Hanford.....dated 1812  
Samuel Seymour.....dated 1813  
Samuel R. Gibbs .....dated 1815/17/18  
William Lockwood.....dated 1823  
Daniel Nash.....dated 1823  
Rulette Fitch .....dated 1825 .....b: 1762-1848)  
William Lockwood.....dated 1845





LEWIS CLARK FITCH .....son of James and Esther and same as above  
Haynes Fitch.....dated 1799.....1734-1815 moved to Ohio in 1806  
Appears to be an uncle to Lewis C. Fitch  
Haynes Fitch.....dated 1800  
Susannah Hanford.....dated 1806  
Samuel R. Gibbs.....dated 1815  
Wm Lockwood.....dated 1827, estate

LINDAL FITCH.....son of Nathaniel.....born 1717 or before  
Nathaniel Fitch.....dated 1739.....Nathaniel was his father  
Oliver Arnold.....dated 1739  
Matthew Fitch.....dated 1743/44.....first cousin, son of John and Lydia  
Haynes Hanford.....dated 1749.....son of Samuel Hanford  
Jonas Seeley .....dated 1751  
John Bartlett.....dated 1752.....father-in-law....father of Mary....d: 1761  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1759  
John Sanders.....dated 1762 .....on the Tory list?? Or father of one who is  
Ebenezer Smith.....dated 1764  
Samuel Lawrance, Jr...dated 1771  
Seymour Fitch, Sr.....dated 1788 .....Father of Lindell, b: 1766  
Seymour Fitch, Sr.....dated 1788.....Lindall son of Nat, then Seymour, then  
Lindall born 1766 again. Young Lindall moved to Walton, New York.  
Ebenezer Smith.....dated 1774.....Estate.....prob. Lindall's estate. Lindall  
Died 1774 so Ebenezer is probably the executor.

LUCY FITCH  
Hezekiah Whitlock.....dated 1818 ..... Don't find the connection. Maybe just sale

LYDIA FITCH, widow.....Might have been Lydia (Kellogg) Fitch though I don't have a  
Death date for her. Might be Lydia Mills Fitch. Cannot be Lydia Bushnell.  
Fitch as she died in 1786. Theophilus died in 1783. Lydia Mills Fitch was  
Also a widow in 1793 and she lived to 1813. So not sure without reading the  
Contract.  
Stephen Betts.....dated 1793.....

MARY FITCH.....  
William Buckingham.....dated 1742/43  
Haynes Hanford.....dated 1749.....called Mary wife of James  
Haynes Hanford.....dated 1749.....called Mary wife of Lindall  
Jonas Seeley.....dated 1751  
John Sanders.....dated 1762  
Ebenezer Smith.....dated 1764  
Moses Comstock Ells.....dated 1784

MATTHEW FITCH .....(Matthew I 1708-79) (Matthew 2 1744-90) (Matthew III  
1776-1812)  
  
John Fitch.....dated 1737.....probably Matthew's father, but could be uncle  
Nathan Olmstead, Jr...dated 1739/40...b: 1703, son of Nathan and Sarah Keeler 1<sup>st</sup>  
Wife and half- brother then of Lydia, Matthew's wife.  
Ezra St. John.....dated 1740  
Justus Miles.....dated 1742.....husband of Hannah, Lydia's sister





Samuel Olmstead.....dated 1743.....b: 1707, son of Nathan and Mercy Comstock,  
 Who was the 2<sup>nd</sup> wife of Nathan Olmstead, Sr. (bro of Mathew's wife Lydia)  
 Lindall Fitch.....dated 1743/44.....Matthew's first cousin, son of Nathaniel  
 Born about 1717  
 Lindall Fitch.....dated 1745/46 .....Same as above prob.  
 John Benedict, Jr.....dated 1749  
 Hezekiah Green.....dated 1765  
 Samuel Lawrence, Jr. ...dated 1771  
 Jeremiah Beard Ells.....dated 1771  
 Abraham Reed.....dated 1777  
 Daniel Bendict.....dated 1779.....estate prob. of Matthew I to son Matthew  
 Isaac Kellogg.....dated 1781.....married Matthew's Sr. daughter Hannah;  
 May have been Matthew II to Isaac as Matthew I was dead by 1779  
 Jacob Richards.....dated 1781  
 Eliakim Reed.....dated 1781.....married Rebecca b: 1752, dau. of Matthew  
 Sr. and Lydia Olmstead  
 Possible these last ones may have to do with the settlement of Matthew's estate tho  
 It doesn't say so.

Seymour Fitch.....dated 1782, one 1783, and one 1785.....prob. Lindall's son  
 Seymour who died in 1799. Would be cousins with Matthew. 2<sup>nd</sup> cousins.  
 But we know that Seymour's family went to Walton New York at about the  
 Turn of the century with other Fitch families.  
 Joseph Smith, administrator.....dated 1780.....estate of Matthew Fitch

MATTHEW FITCH, JR. (Prob. 1744-1790) married Sarah Reed  
 Lindall Fitch.....dated 1769.....not sure which Lindall this is  
 Lindall's name was spelled Lindel, Lindoll, and other ways  
 Ezra Hoyt.....dated 1772.....  
 Matthew Fitch, Sr.....dated 1772 .....Matthew I probably  
 Lindal Fitch Estate.....dated 1774 .....Lindall died in 1774  
 Seymour Fitch.....dated 1774.....Seymour died in 1799  
 John Northrop.....dated 1776  
 Abraham Reed.....dated 1777  
 Jacob Selleck.....dated 1777.....1744-1821 married to both Hannah and Sarah  
 Fitch. Hannah was daughter of Lindall.  
 Samuel Benedict.....dated 1777.....estate

MR. FITCH (probably then this belonged to the eldest one at the time of the date)  
 Town of Norwalk.....1666.....Thomas 1612-1703  
 Town of Norwalk.....1667.....Thomas 1612-1703  
 Town of Norwalk.....1706/7.....this was after the elder Thomas died so do not  
 Know who it refers to. Would have to see if the contract says, but usually if  
 It does, the not is made here on the paper who it refers to. Don't know if the  
 Person doing the indexes read every contract, deed or what!! Quite a job.  
 But they chose people with excellent handwriting.

NATHAN FITCH  
 Joseph Clinton.....dated 1761  
 Samuel Grumman.....dated 1770.....Samuel, b: 1725, son of Samuel Grumman  
 And Rebecca Betts maybe  
 John Green.....dated 17 ??  
 David Comstock.....dated 1771



Samuel Lawrence, Jr....dated 1771  
Matthew Fitch.....dated 1773.....probably his father or brother  
Samuel Hoit.....dated 1773

NATHANIEL FITCH .....1682-1743 (as far as I know there are no other Nathaniels who  
Could be found in the area unless it was the son of John and Elizabeth Beers. This  
Nathaniel would have been born about 1735 and died in 1766. Will see if there are  
Any that fit into this category. At a birthdate of 1735 it would have been 1756  
Before he became of any legal age to receive or sell property.

Town of Norwalk.....1709/10.....Nat 1682-1743  
Town of Norwalk.....1709/10  
Thomas Fitch.....dated 1719/20.....This may be the one we have of Nath and  
Elizabeth, his first wife, selling something back to Thomas Fitch, Sr. A  
Further look at these on the films might give us some help in this. The one  
That Ann Hassold got was very dark and hard to read. Perhaps with the  
New printers we can do a better job. I hope so.  
Eleazer Hanford.....dated 1721  
Benjamin Scribner.....dated 1722/23  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1722/23  
Thomas Betts.....dated 1722/23  
John Fitch.....dated 1743.....to his son, prob. just before he died  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1724  
Alexander Resseque.....dated 1726  
John Fitch.....dated 1731/32  
David Sherwood.....dated 1731/32.....died 1759, wife, Sarah Meeker, and his  
Son was Jabez.  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1733/34  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1733/34  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1736  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1736  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1736  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1738  
John Bears/Beers.....dated 1758  
Elizabeth Fitch.....dated 1765.....this one I believe may be from Brother to  
Sister. Nathaniel, 1735-1766. Sister would still be Eliz. Fitch who later  
Married to David King.  
Abijah Fitch.....dated 1793

I want to write a paragraph about the David Sherwood name. I have wondered how close  
the Sherwoods were to the Fitch family in PA. I understood from some of the writings that  
the Sherwoods came from Danbury and nothing was mentioned about Norwalk or other  
places. Now in this one deed entry we find that David Sherwood was the elder of the same  
family that went to PA. David was the father of Jabez and Jabez was the father of the elder  
Matthew. I will have to go through the information but it appears that this is the  
continuation of the David Sherwood family and a Mathew and his sons came to PA with or  
lived by John Fitch. This family was clearly from Westport so of that area. We have above  
a need in 1731 to Nathaniel from David Sherwood. So the two families were together  
perhaps in both places. Perhaps they did move to Danbury before heading for PA but we  
find that these folks all were in all these places as the proprietors had land in all sections.  
I found the comings and goings from Wilton and New Canaan were happening all the time.

NATHANIEL FITCH (1770-1818) went to Walton





Ezra Benedict .....1797.....this may be the Nathaniel who went to Walton  
Stephen Hoyt, Jr.....dated 1800.....as above  
James Arnold.....dated 1801.....as above  
David King.....dated 1768.....This would be our Nathaniel again who died  
In 1766 and his estate is being settled.

#### POLLY FITCH

Hiram Brown.....dated 1831  
Alford Seeley.....dated 1831  
Mary Raymond.....dated 1831  
Hiram Brown.....dated 1838  
Nicholas Vincent.....dated 1840  
Charles W. Raymond...dated 1847

#### REBECKAH FITCH.....called Widow

Samuel Fitch.....dated 1789.....Estate, may be father-in-law of Rebecca  
Daniel Fitch.....dated 1791.....Estate (Daniel died 1788, husband of Rebecca  
Marvin)  
Odd that father and son both died about the same time.

#### RICHARD H. FITCH, born 1770 and son of Thomas Fitch V

Mary E. Fitch.....dated 1796 .....prob. his sister, Mary Esther

#### RULETTE FITCH 1762-1748, daughter of James and Ann

James Fitch.....dated 1810  
Lewis C. Fitch.....dated 1820.....half-brother  
John H. Fitch.....dated 1829 .....prob. nephew

#### SALLY FITCH.....

Denton Gregory.....dated 1811  
LeGrand Cannon.....dated 1823

#### SAMUEL FITCH..... Samuel, brother of the Gov. 1698-1787 (Samuel and Susannah)

Samuel II, 1727-1811 (Samuel and Elizabeth)

Samuel III, 1761-1823 (Samuel and Olive)

Samuel IV, 1793-1862 (Samuel and Hannah)

Town of Norwalk.....dated 1722/23 .....Samuel 1

John Stuart.....dated 1726

Thomas Fitch, Sr.....dated 1726 (Has to be Thomas III)

Ebenezer Gregory.....dated 1728/9

Thomas Fitch, Sr.....dated 1728/9

Joshua Raymond.....dated 1736/37

Josiah Thatcher.....dated 1741

Joseph Platt.....dated 1739

John Marvin .....dated 1756

David Lambert.....dated 1797.....born 1744, married Susannah Rogers

Cyrus Fitch.....dated 1816.....have Cyrus's born 1788, 1799, 1814

Will just put down a sampling of the Samuel deeds as he was a judge and apparently did a lot of buying and selling.

Norwalk Cemetery Assn.....dated 1872

Highway for Norwalk.....dated 1764.....committee with Josiah Thatcher





SAMUEL FITCH, SR.

Joseph Platt Fitch.....dated 1794 (1753-1797)

SAMUEL FITCH, JR.

Samuel Fitch, Sr.....dated 1757

Thaddeus Stuart estate...dated 1759

Samuel Fitch.....dated 1772 and 1775

Daniel Stuart.....dated 1784 .....estate

Samuel Stuart.....dated 1790.....estate

Samuel Fitch.....dated 1792

Samuel Fitch, Sr.....dated 1797

SAMUEL M. FITCH (1770-1820) married Esther Fitch, dau. of Timothy and Esther  
(1800-1854) their son

Henry Betts.....dated 1801

Joseph Fitch.....dated 1804

Edward Fitch.....dated 1804

James Mallory.....dated 1846 .....prob. the son

Edward Fitch.....dated 1847 .....prob. the son

SAMUEL MERVINE FITCH (Prob. same as above)

Thomas Fitch.....dated 1802

SARAH FITCH

Thomas Hill.....dated 1764

Andrew Hanford.....dated 1812

Helena Gray.....dated 1814

Samuel Hanford.....dated 1814

Jachariah W. Fitch.....dated 1827 and 1832

Edwin Lockwood.....dated 1843

James M. Hoyt.....dated 1844

SEYMOUR FITCH .....(1742-1799)

Lindall Fitch.....dated 1765.....(1717-1773) father

Lindall Fitch.....dated 1768

Sarah Bouton, Jr.....dated 1770

Lindall Fitch.....dated 1771

Lindall Fitch.....dated 1773

David Hoit.....dated 1774

Isaac Arnold.....dated 1782

Samuel Hutton.....dated 1782

Aprthorp Charles .....dated 1783.....Estate.....

Mary Fitch.....dated 1784

John Keeler.....dated 1784

Abraham Raymond.....dated 1786 (1706- )

Nehemiah St. John.....date 1786

Ebenezer Smith.....date 1774.....Executor.....Estate, Lindall Fitch

John Cannon.....date 1801.....Estate

SEYMOUR FITCH, JR. .... (1764-1834)

Seymour Fitch, Sr.....dated 1788 b: 1742 d: 1799

David Hoyt.....dated 1788.....they married Hoyts, but do not see a



Connection yet with David though he is in both lists.  
Seymour Fitch, Sr.....dated 1788.....

STEPHEN FITCH.....(1767- )

Bela Nash.....dated 1784  
Lucy St. John.....dated 1786  
Enoch Olmstead.....dated 1787  
Gershom Selleck.....dated 1787.....b: 1730 Stephen married Charlotte Selleck so  
Gershom is his father-in-law  
Matthew Keeler.....dated 1791  
Moses Comstock Ells..dated 1791  
Isaac G. Isaacs.....dated 1791.....b: 1760 married Susannah St. John  
Abijah Fitch.....dated 1792.....Matthew's son ???  
Thomas Belden.....dated 1795 & 97  
William Keeler.....dated 1799  
Isaac Keeler.....dated 1799  
Phebe Fitch.....dated 1802.....called widow  
James Fitch, Jr.....dated 1816  
Joseph P. Hanford.....dated 1817  
Henry Belden.....dated 1818  
Ebenezer Smith.....dated 1824  
Jonathan Fitch.....dated 1825.....estate.....(1777-1823)  
Samuel Hanford.....dated 1826  
James Fitch.....dated 1826  
William Lockwood.....dated 1836  
Thomas B. Butler.....dated 1836

SUSANNAH FITCH

George Day.....dated 1834  
John Smith.....dated 1839  
George Day.....dated 1846

THEOPHILUS FITCH (1709-1783)

John Fitch.....dated 1737.....probably father  
Mathew Gregory.....dated 1740  
Samuel Kellogg.....dated 1745  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1745/6  
Daniel Seymour.....dated 1749  
Joseph St. John.....dated 1750  
Ebenezer Crofoot.....dated 1761  
Bushnell Fitch.....dated 1769.....1711-1805 .....brother  
Samuel Lockwood.....dated 1773  
James Lockwood.....dated 1773.....estate  
Joseph Smith.....dated 1781.....executor  
Joseph Fitch.....dated 1784  
Isaac Kellogg.....dated 1788  
Joseph Fitch.....dated 1791  
Stephen Abbott.....dated 1816  
Ebenezer Smith.....dated 1774.....estate.....Lindall Fitch

THEOPHILUS FITCH, JR. ....(1751- )

Stephen Betts, Capt....July 2, 1780 .....exemption from military duty





THOMAS FITCH.....LIST IS REALLY LONG.....WILL TRY TO PUT IN ONLY  
THOSE I KNOW ARE RELATED

Thomas I (1612-1704)  
Thomas II (1630-1684)  
Thomas III (1665-1731)  
Thomas IV (Governor 1700-1774)  
Thomas V (1725-1795)

Indians.....dated 1651  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1655  
Plantation of Norwalk.....dated 1655  
Plantation of Norwalk.....dated 1660  
George Abbott.....dated 1660  
Plantation of Norwalk.....dated 1660-72  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1660-62-66-67  
Gov. Robert Treat.....dated 1686  
John Bartlett.....dated 1709  
John Fitch, Sr.....dated 1711.....prob Thomas III from John 1677-  
Nathaniel Fitch.....dated 1719/20.....our Nathaniel to Thomas III  
Nathaniel Fitch.....dated 1719/20.....our Nathaniel to Thomas III  
John Fitch, Jr.....dated 1721-22.....?????  
Samuel Fitch.....dated 1739  
Andrew Fitch.....dated 1803

#### THOMAS FITCH, SR.

George Abbott.....dated 1652  
Edward Church.....dated 1652.....may be the "home-lott"  
Plantation of Norwalk.....dated 1652  
Plantation of Norwalk.....dated 1653  
Plantation of Norwalk.....dated 1654  
Edward Church.....dated 1654, 1655.....  
Plantation of Norwalk.....dates of 1672  
Town of Norwalk.....dated 1672  
Nathaniel Fitch.....dated 1726.....Nathaniel 1682-1743  
Probably this was Thomas III as I and II would have died by this time

#### THOMAS FITCH, JR. (Thomas II 1630-1684) or Thomas III (1665-1731)

Ralph Keeler, Sr.....1665  
Town of Norwalk.....1667/1670  
Thos Fitch, Sr.....dated 1671.....prob. Thos. I to son, Thos. II  
John Fitch, Sr.....dated 1695.....prob. John I (1633-aprox 1714)  
Joseph Ketchum.....dated 1700.....  
Thomas Fitch, Sr.....dated 1724.....in 1724 Thos Sr.would have been Thos III  
Thomas Fitch, Sr.....dated 1728.....Thomas III to Thomas IV  
Thomas Fitch, Sr.....dated 1763.....Prob. Gov to son

#### TIMOTHY FITCH .....perhaps Timothy (1735-1802) who married Esther Platt

Thomas Fairweather.....dated 1790  
Abraham Benedict.....dated 1796

TIMOTHY B. FITCH.....born 1821, son of Charles and Sally, gr. son of Timothy  
And Esther





Timothy Merwin.....dated 1849

WALTER J. FITCH.....born 1816, son of Stephen and Cornelia

Lyman Knapp.....dated 1845

St. Paul's Church.....dated 1855.....this is the same church to which our  
Nathaniel must have belonged as he left money for it in his will or if not in  
The will, at least as a donation before he died.

St. Paul's Church.....dated 1856

WILLIAM FITCH (1764-1843)....Son of Elijah and Phebe.....m. to Mary Guire

Elijah Fitch.....dated 1802.....Jan. 1802

Phebe Fitch, widow.....dated 1802.....June 1802 so must have died between  
January and June as Phebe is call a widow.

WILLIAM S. FITCH Several Wm. S. Fitches: William Smith Fitch, b: 1816 ??

Ebenezer Grummon.....dated 1838 and 1841

Benjamin Fallow, 2<sup>nd</sup>.....dated 1844

Seth A. Webb.....dated 1852

Lewis Fitch.....dated 1855

Norwalk Cem. Assn.....1868



## Weston Cemeteries

### Cemeteries

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Coley  
Devil's Den  
Lyons Plains  
Norfield  
Osborn  
Rollins  
Tharp

Westport

### Probate & Land Records

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#### Westport Probate Office

110 Myrtle Avenue  
Westport, CT 06880  
(203) 226-8311

**Hours:** Monday - Friday, 9:00am - 4:30 pm.

**Probate Records:** May 1835-Present.

Comments: Earlier probate records may be found in the Norwalk or Fairfield.

**Probate records, 1835-1928** Connecticut. Probate Court (Westport District) Available through the LDS Family History Library.

9 microfilm reels:

Probate records v. 1 1835-1847 - FHL US/CAN Film [ 1480153 ]  
Probate records v. 2-3,6-7(p.1-110) 1847-1881 - FHL US/CAN Film [ 1480154 ]  
Probate records v. 7(p.110-end) 1881-1901 - FHL US/CAN Film [ 1480155 ]  
Probate records v. 8-9,11(p.1-500) 1860-1905 - FHL US/CAN Film [ 1480156 ]  
Probate records v. 11(p.500-end)-13 1883-1909 - FHL US/CAN Film [ 1480157 ]  
Probate records v. 16,19 1890-1904 - FHL US/CAN Film [ 1480158 ]  
Probate records v. 20-22,26(p.1-620) 1900- 1928 - FHL US/CAN Film [ 1480159 ]  
Probate records v. 26(p.620-end),28 1912-1916 - FHL US/CAN Film [ 1480160 ]  
Probate records v. 1-2 1835-1854 - FHL US/CAN Film [ 6255 ]

**Land records, 1835-1909** Westport (Connecticut). Town Clerk. Available through the LDS Family History Library.

11 microfilm reels ; 35 mm. Most volumes individually indexed. Some volumes were divided into two volumes with the same volume number when they were rebound.

Land records, v. 1-2 1835-1877 - FHL US/CAN Film [ 6256 ]  
Land records, v. 3-4 1840-1849 - FHL US/CAN Film [ 6257 ]  
Land records, v. 5 1847-1854 - FHL US/CAN Film [ 6258 ]  
Land records, v. 6-8(p.161) 1850-1860 - FHL US/CAN Film [ 1491377 ]  
Land records, v. 8(p.160)-10(p.361) 1860-1875 - FHL US/CAN Film [ 1491378 ]  
Land records, v. 10(p.360)-12(p.441) 1866-1874 - FHL US/CAN Film [ 1491379 ]  
Land records, v. 12(p.440)-14 1874-1884 - FHL US/CAN Film [ 1491380 ]  
Land records, v. 16-18(p.161) 1880-1889 - FHL US/CAN Film [ 1491381 ]  
Land records, v. 18(p.160)-20(p.141) 1886-1901 - FHL US/CAN Film [ 1491382 ]  
Land records, v. 20(p.140)-22(p.371) 1890-1903 - FHL US/CAN Film [ 1491383 ]  
Land records, v. 22(p.370)-23 1898-1909 - FHL US/CAN Film [ 1491384 ]

**The Connecticut State Library** has received most probate records prior to 1850. Pre-1850 records are also available on microfilm .

### Cemeteries

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- Assumption
- Catholic and Christ
- Compo Colonial





- Evergreen
- King's Highway
- Lower Green Farms
- Post Road
- Taylor
- Upper Green Farms
- Willowbrook

**The Hale Collection of Connecticut Cemetery Inscriptions** (1600's to 1930's) is available through [The Connecticut State Library](#)

## Wilton

### Cemeteries

- Bald Hill
- Beers
- Comstock
- Davis
- DeForest
- Hillside
- Joe's Hill
- Old
- Ruscoe
- Sharp's Hill
- St. Matthew's
- Zion Hill

## New Canaan 1850 census

12		Philo T. Fitch	52	M	W	None	4,500	CT
13		Theophilus Fitch	46	M	W	None		CT

368	396	William Fitch	61	M	W	Shoemaker	2,720	C T
10			Mary Fitch	64	F	W		CT
11			Ennis Fitch	30	M	W		CT
12			James M. Kee	17	M	W	Shoemaker	NY
13		397	William S. Fitch	28	M	W	Shoemaker	CT
14			Mary Fitch	56	F	W		CT





## Philo Fitch

Age in 1860: 64  
Birth Year: abt 1796  
Birthplace: Connecticut  
Home in 1860: New Canaan, Fairfield, Connecticut  
Gender: Male  
Post Office: Norwalk  
Value of real estate: [View image](#)

Household Members:	Name	Age
	<a href="#">Clarinda Ayres</a>	59
	<a href="#">Julia A Ayres</a>	22
	<a href="#">Alisia S Ayres</a>	20
	<a href="#">Philo Fitch</a>	64
	<a href="#">Theophilus Fitch</a>	59
	<a href="#">A Harrison</a>	9
	<a href="#">Abbey Miller</a>	17
	<a href="#">Irving Benedict</a>	26
	<a href="#">Lena Benedict</a>	25
	<a href="#">Antonia Benedict</a>	3

This is a boarding house and Theophilus is listed as being blind.  
They must be two brothers but who is their father?? Both born CT.

[Record](#) **Philo Fitch**

6 Apr 1796

- William S. FITCH
- *Surname:* Fitch
- *Given Name:* William S.
- *Sex:* M
- *Birth:* 1823 in New Canaan, Fairfield County, CT
- *\_UID:* CAFC066ADFE47C45BB315CB2061B1FBAAED1
- *Note:*

The 1850 Census lists William, age 27, as living next door to his father in New Canaan, CT with his wife Mary, age 26, and working as a shoemaker.

No children listed

- *Change Date:* 13 Sep 2006 at 01:00:00

*Father:* [William FITCH](#) b: 1789 in New Canaan, Fairfield County, CT

*Mother:* [Mary "Molly" COLE](#) b: 14 May 1783 in Norwalk, Wilton Parish, Fairfield County, CT

- William FITCH
- *Surname:* Fitch
- *Given Name:* William

**Suggested Next Step:**  
Search OneWorldTree



- *Sex:* M
- *Birth:* 1789 in New Canaan, Fairfield County, CT
- *Death:* 23 Jan 1852 in New Canaan, Fairfield County, CT
- *\_UID:* 5B017F22B226FE48AF575979EC5DAE36207E
- *Note:* William, age 67, is listed in the 1850 Census as a shoemaker worth \$2,700, living in New Canaan, CT with his wife, Mary, and a daughter Eunice, age 30. Living next door is a son, William, Jr. and his wife Mary. He is also a shoemaker
- *Change Date:* 13 Sep 2006 at 01:00:00

for:  
Fitch, William



**Included with this search:**

- View multiple generations
- Change tree views to get the look you want
- View supporting source, i.e., census images
- View alternate information
- Anonymously contact submitters of tree data

*Marriage 1* Mary "Molly" COLE b: 14 May 1783 in Norwalk, Wilton Parish, Fairfield County, CT

- *Married:* 6 May 1818 in Wilton, Fairfield County, CT

Children

1. Eunice FITCH b: 1820 in New Canaan, Fairfield County, CT
2. William S. FITCH b: 1823 in New Canaan, Fairfield County, CT

- William Smith FITCH
- *Sex:* M
- *Birth:* 9 Mar 1816 in Connecticut
- *Death:* BEF 1900 in Norwalk, CT

*Father:* Smith FITCH

*Mother:* Phebe FILLow

1 Harriet RAYMOND b: 7 Mar 1821 in Norwalk, CT

- *Married:* 27 Jun 1838

Children





1. Eliza J. FITCH b: 31 Oct 1839 in Norwalk, CT
2. Harriet Rebecca FITCH b: 19 Jun 1843 in Norwalk, CT

- William, Sr., Colonel FITCH
- *Given Name*: William, Sr., Colonel
- *Surname*: Fitch
- *Sex*: M
- *Birth*: 10 Oct 1756 in Stamford, Conn. <sup>1</sup>
- *Death*: 1804 in Stamford, Conn. <sup>1</sup>

*Father*: Perez FITCH b: 1 Dec 1726 in Canterbury, Connecticut

*Mother*: Martha COGGESHALL b: 25 Jun 1730 in New Haven, Conn.

1 Elizabeth HOLLY b: 23 Dec 1765 in Stamford, Conn.

- *Married*: 1781 <sup>1</sup>

#### Children

1. Catherine FITCH b: 8 Jul 1782
2.  Catherine Matilda FITCH b: 1 Jul 1783 in Stamford, Conn.
3. Samuel FITCH b: 25 Aug 1785
4.  Elizabeth FITCH b: 22 May 1789 in Stamford, Conn.
5. William, Jr. FITCH b: 7 Jan 1792
6. Augustus, Reverend FITCH b: 13 Jul 1794
7. Adeline FITCH b: Abt. 1796
8. Theodore Perez FITCH b: 7 Feb 1799
9.  James Davenport FITCH b: 1801 in Stamford, Conn.

- Perez FITCH
- *Given Name*: Perez
- *Surname*: Fitch
- *Sex*: M
- *Birth*: 1 Dec 1726 in Canterbury, Connecticut <sup>1</sup>
- *Death*: in Y <sup>1</sup>
- *Title*: M. D.
- *Birth*: 1 Dec 1726 in Canterbury, Conn. <sup>2 3</sup>
- *Change Date*: 5 Jun 2004 <sup>1</sup>

*Father*: Jabez, Sr., Colonel FITCH b: 30 Jun 1702 in Canterbury, Conn.

*Mother*: Lydia GALE b: 9 Jul 1699 in Watertown, Mass.





*Father:* Jabez FITCH b: 30 Jan 1701/02 in Norwich, New London, Connecticut

*Mother:* Lydia GALE b: 9 Jul 1699 in Watertown, Mass.

1 Martha COGGESHALL b: 25 Jun 1730 in New Haven, Conn.

- *Married:* 1753<sup>3</sup>

## Children

1. Martha FITCH b: 20 Jul 1754
2.  William, Sr., Colonel FITCH b: 10 Oct 1756 in Stamford, Conn.
3.  Abigail FITCH b: 29 Mar 1760 in Stamford, Conn.
4. Catherine FITCH b: 1763
5. Betsey FITCH b: 4 Oct 1765
6. Samuel FITCH b: 30 Aug 1768
7. Catherine FITCH b: Abt. 1769



## **Sarah Seeley**

Spouse: **Nathaniel Fitch**

Parents: **James Redfield , Deborah Sturges**

Birth Place: **Fairfield, CT**

Birth Date: **1690**

## **Nathaniel Fitch**

Parents: **Jonathan Fitch , Ann Calkin**

Birth Place: **Salisbury, CT**

Birth Date: **15 Feb 1767**





- THEOPHILUS MEAD
- *Sex:* M
- *Birth:* 3 JUL 1700
- *Death:* 1760

*Father:* JOSEPH MEAD b: ABT 1657

*Mother:* SARAH REYNOLDS b: ABT 1659

1 ABIGAIL WESTCOTT b: ABT 1702

- *Married:* ABT 1720

## Children

1. AZOR MEAD b: 1734/1735
2. ABIGAIL MEAD b: ABT 1737
3. MARY MEAD b: 1738/1739
4. ESTHER MEAD b: ABT 1741
5. RACHEL MEAD b: ABT 1742
6. MARTH MEAD b: ABT 1743
7. SARAH MEAD b: ABT 1744
8. THEOPHILUS MEAD b: ABT 1745





**Search Results Provided By****Data Source:** Connecticut Marriages to 1800

Sunday, July 22, 2007 5:05:23 PM

- [p.65] Nathaniel Darrow & Elizabeth Stuart, March 9, 1757  
Rev. Moses Dikeman & Mrs. Hannah St. John, July 28, 1757  
D. Dunkins of Grensfarms & Sarah Dolittle of Wilton, March 20, 1758  
E□□ D□□ & S□□ B□ Oct. 25, 1764  
Ruben Disbrow & Ezebel Olmsted, June 24, 1796  
Samuel Edmonson & Mary Bears, March 17, 1736 *Beers*  
John Egleston (stranger) & Grace Bischard, Jan. 31, 1739□40  
Eleakim Elmer & Lydia Trobridge, May 9, 1735□6  
Jeremiah Ells & Mahitable Merwin of Canaan, April 30, 1778  
□□ Everet & widow □□ Remington, April 28, 1746□7
- Joseph Platt Fitch & Eunice Betts, Nov. 16, 1780
  - Dr. Fitch of Redding & Hannah Lockwood of Wilton, Oct. 4, 1764
  - Seymour Fitch & widow Sarah Raymond, Feb. 5, 1778
  - Stephen Fitch of Wilton & Hannah ~~Betts~~ of Norwalk, Sept. 2, 1778
  - Samuel Fountain & Abigail Stuart, Jan. 20, 1746□7
  - Squire Fancer & Abigail Abbott, Oct. 12, 1796
  - Jonathan Fox & Margaret Cole, Sept. 18, 1765
  - Aaron Fox & Sally Dunning, Feb. 4, 1798
  - Ichobod French & Abigail Olmsted, Jan. 21, 1798
  - Solomen Ferry & Amer Betts, 1798
  - Ebenezer Green & Elizabeth Gilbert, March 24, 1747□8
  - Joseph Green & Sarah Beers, May 15, 1746
  - Nathaniel Griffin & Mable Noble, Aug. 5, 1746
  - Seth Griffin & Mary Westcoat, Jan. 2, 1758
  - Ebenezer Gray & Anne Lockwood of Grensfarms, Dec. 26, 1757
  - Samuel Gates & □□ Olmsted, Nov. 19, 1758
  - Benjamin Grey & Elizabeth Waterbury, Nov. 25, 1779
  - Reuben Gregory & Hannah Dunning, Dec. 5, 1750
  - Denton Gregory & Elizabeth Sherwood, Jan. 18, 1753
  - Nathan Gregory & Sarah St. John, July 3, 1754
  - Joseph Gregory & Mary Morehouse, Nov. 8, 1756
  - Elijah Gregory & Ruhamah Gregory, Dec. 13, 1758
  - Jackin Gregory & Rebena Chard, Oct. 21, 1759
  - Daniel Gregory & Esther Hickox, May 17, 1763
  - Aaron Gregory & Betty Keeler, □
- [p.66] Samuel Gregory & Martha Green, May 23, 1775
- Noah Gregory & Sarah Nash, Jan. 25, 1776
  - Jehiel Gregory & Phebe Arnold, March 13, 1776

...

...

...

Aaron Gregory & Bridget Belden, Feb. 15, 1780

Elijah Gregory & □□ Gregory of Norwalk, □□ 23, 1778

Gersham Gregory & Eunice Whitlock, April 8, 1779

➤ Ezra Gregory & Hannah Betts, Nov. 20, 1751

Benjamin Gilbert & Sarah Higgins, March, 1751

Nathan Gilbert & Sarah Betts, April, 1770

➤ David Grommand & Sarah Morehouse, March 18, 1756

➤ Nehemiah Grommand & Abigail Keeler, May 18, 1744

➤ Elias Gregory & Betty Raymond, Dec. 29, 1777

Abraham Gregory & Dolly Lockwood, Jan. 29, 1778

Ezra Gregory & Sarah Hubbell, June 11, 1778

Moses Grumman & Dolly Birchard, Oct. 22, 1797

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#### Source Information:

Ancestry.com. *Connecticut Marriages to 1800* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: The Generations Network, Inc., 1997. Original data: Bailey, Frederic W.. *Early Connecticut Marriages as Found on Ancient Church Records prior to 1800*. New Haven, CT, USA: Bureau of American Ancestry, 1896-1906.

#### Description:

Complete marriage records from the beginning of the colony to 1800

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<u>Azor</u> <u>Mead</u>	Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the I-War of Revolution, II-War of 1812, III- Mexican War	IV. Connecticut Militia, 1776-1783	Lieut-Colonel Baldwin's 522 Regiment
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Allen County Public Library  
Ft. Wayne, Indiana

*I never pass an old church by  
But that it seems to testify,  
That darkness cannot conquer light  
That love shall some day subdue might.  
An old church on a shaded hill  
Makes me worship and be still.*

—Galen Edward Hershey

## WILTON PARISH

1726 - 1951

**W**ILTON WAS SETTLED, early in the eighteenth century, for reasons remarkably like those which in 1951 make it such a rapidly growing Town. People then, as now, wanted to get away from the more heavily populated centers and to better their living conditions. Furthermore, the beauty and the munificence of the fertile meadows, winding streams and high ridges of the land to the north of the Township of Norwalk appealed as much to "ye Inhabitants of Kent-Beldons Hill, Chestnut Hill and So Upwards" in that early day as it does to the commuters and residents of today. There is, therefore, a striking similarity between the first settlement of Wilton and the request for "Parrish Privi-



## WILTON PARISH

leges" in 1726 and the influx of new people and the development of the Town on the occasion of its 225th Anniversary Celebration in 1951.

In the first years after the Pilgrims landed, most of the towns in Connecticut were organized along the coast. In the Norwalk area, white settlers had their farms next to the plots of the Indians, fishermen and tillers, who lived on sea food and maize. Almost inevitably, differences rose between them. The Indians filed many damage claims against the whites because the settlers' hogs were constantly getting into the Indian plantings. And on the other hand, as the population increased, the Colonists coveted the Indian lands.

As a result, the Indians of Norwalk were ordered—sometime after the middle 1600's—to move to the Chestnut Hills, and thus became the first substantial body of settlers in what is now Wilton.

Meanwhile, tradition has it, the first scattered Colonial homes were built in the area now called South Wilton. However, in those days of virtually compulsory Church attendance, removal too far from the village green and its Church was not attractive, and the real push towards settlement of the interior waited on the growth, through immigration, of a large group which had no automatic rights to the common lands of the Colony. These

[2]

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

latecomers had to buy rights of commonage from the original "proprietor" or "stockholding" families who owned the commons, and, therefore, such newcomers were tempted to move to the outskirts, as were many of the sons of the original settlers. Some families had already gone to start Danbury in 1685. In 1708, other Norwalkers bought land from the Indians to found Ridgefield. In the early eighteenth century, too, new settlers moved by horse-drawn cart to new homes in the Wilton area, though carefully avoiding the "wolf pits beyond" (presumably commemorated by Wolf-pit Road), for "there still lurked the wolf, the catamount, and other wild beasts, ready to come down with their depredations upon the flocks and herds of the new settlers." The first homestead here was built in Candale "above Pimpawaug" (which is Algonquin for "narrow place") and became known exotically as "Egypt."

Meantime, proprietors with a speculative turn of mind saw that quick profits could be made by sale of these "wild" lands to the north. The areas would be more valuable, of course, if that long trip down to meeting every Sunday could be eliminated. The stage for establishment of a Church in the Wilton region was set!

To get a Church nearer home, the inhabitants of Wilton that year petitioned Norwalk to

[3]





## WILTON PARISH

permit them to form a Parish of their own. The Wilton historian, the late Deacon G. Evans Hubbard, pictures what was probably happening in the fall of 1725. "We can easily imagine the Wilton farmers bringing their grain to Benjamin Hickox's Mill on the Fall Branch (now known as the Merwin Falls) back of the present Congregational Church. Mr. Buckingham (Minister of the Congregational Church on the Green in Norwalk) had been very strict, they may have said, in requiring the new settlers up the Norwalk River to attend his Church regularly the past winter, the state of the roads notwithstanding. Another winter was at hand. Mr. Buckingham was unpopular in Norwalk (due apparently to 'unbecoming' habits, a reference possibly to tippling—not an uncommon practice in those early days). Could we not have a Church of our own?"

Norwalk cooperatively approved the Petition. In February, 1726, the Norwalk Parish granted "Tenn Acres of land" to the new Parish "for the use of the Presbyterian or Congregational ministry among them forever." A little later it gave twenty-three acres more. Beyond that, the Town "by a major vote granted to the inhabitants of ye upper society, the old pulpit, upon free gift." If Wilton had no Church, it at least now had a pulpit!

Then, just 225 years ago, in response to

[4]

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

a Petition by thirty-one persons interestingly worded:

The Humble Petition of ye Inhabitants of Kent, Beldens Hill, Chestnut Hill, and So Upwards within the Township of Norwalk . . . . . Humbly Showeth that by and with ye Comfort, Approbation & Incouragement of our Ancestors, Progenitors & primitive Settlers and Others of ye Ancient Society in the sd Township to have been endeavoring to prepare an fitting our Selves for a Uniform Society and fixed Congregation for the Worship of God and ye Administration of such Ordinances belonging thereunto, and to be a Parrish or Village by our Selves and in Reference to what ye Town hath Acted or Done in this Affaire; We here with Exhibit attested Copies Transcribed out of ye Records of ye Minits of ye Town Acts whereby Your Honrs may be Satisfied in our hitherto proceedings, and Would Encourage our Selves that we may be Your Honrs Favorites, in Granting unto us Parrish Priviledges, whereby we may proceed Legally in What is Necessary for ye Obtaining the Special Ends Aimed at, And that Your Honrs would give us the name of Wilton Parrish in Norwalk, And Your Honrs therein will much oblige Your Most Humble Petitioners who in Duty Bound Shall Ever pray etc.

the Connecticut General Assembly created a new entity (but not yet a "Town") by voting approval to these words (May 12, 1726): "This Assembly do hereby Grant that the said inhabitants (of Kent, Beldons Hill, Chestnut Hill and So Upwards) be one Village enjoying Parrish Priviledges and that they may be called by the name of Wilton Parrish."

[5]



## WILTON PARISH

This was the first time that the name Wilton was used. Why this was chosen is not known, though the Town is popularly believed to be named after Wilton in Wiltshire, England, because David Lambert, later "town taverner," had come from there.

The Church was organized early that summer (the first meeting of the Wilton Society of which there is any record is that of June 7, 1726). The rest of that year, the Parish was busy building its first Meeting-House at a point then near the center of population, south of Wolfpit Road, near the present railroad track. Later this original Church building was virtually forgotten, so that John Gaylord Davenport could reminisce in 1916, "Although my own boyhood was spent but a short distance from the consecrated spot and I was very familiar with the place, a favorite resort for huckleberry seekers, no hint of its history was ever given me."

However, just 100 years ago, when the railroad was built through to Danbury, excavation of ten whitened skeletons indicated where the burial grounds had been and where the first Meeting-House stood. The markers used were field stones. After the discovery, the remains were removed to the Sharp Hill Cemetery.

Before that first year was over, the Society had voted that the Meeting-House should be "rectified by laying the floor, and by plastering

[6]

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

the walls, and by making comfortable seats to sett in." This business of seating was so important that in November a committee of three was appointed to "seat it by list and age, according to the best of their judgment." One member found the task so delicate that he immediately resigned, and was replaced.

It took two months to resolve the differences on seating status. For if democracy was being born in America, the old aristocratic ideas insisted on protocol. Men of age and wealth had to have the best seats (the women and children taking inferior places, of course,) and in some Parishes there were heated discussions and even bitter legal disputes over the ranking.

In this Church, wealth got an edge over age. At the head of the Great Pew sat Joseph Birchard, whose prominence at 53 put him over John Stuart, the Norwalk Town surveyor, who was 59. The wealthy farmer, John Keeler, 45, also had a spot over his cousin Ralph, 53.

Music got recognition, significantly, six years later when John St. John was given a choice seat "so long as he sets ye tune."

Incidentally, at that time, all Wiltonians were fined five shillings for every failure to attend Church on Sundays, Fast Days and Thanksgiving. (At Hartford the fine was ten shillings!) These Sunday laws were enforced, too. At New Haven, for example, one William

[7]

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LIBRARY  
1100 EAST 58TH STREET  
CHICAGO, ILL. 60637



## WILTON PARISH

Blagden fell into some water late Saturday, could not legally light a fire Sunday to dry his clothes, and so went to bed to keep warm. He was found guilty of "sloathfulness" for missing Church and sentenced to be "publicly whipped."

At this time, Wilton is said to have had its stocks and whipping post, too, opposite the present site of St. Matthew's Church. Here also were several of the Town's taverns, where public notices were posted, newspapers could be read, and Town and Society meetings frequently held. Usually, these old taverns had only one public room, the rest of the house being used by the inn-keeper's family, so that a historian remarks of the comforts: "The traveler who hesitated to share not only his room but his bed with an entire stranger was considered so fastidious as to be quite unreasonable. Many a horseman slept on the floor, and if he used his saddle for a pillow, he knew it would not be stolen."

For the first half century of the Wilton Parish, it should be remembered, the Church members owed allegiance to the British crown and flag. King George I of England ruled the colony in 1726, and the parishioners undoubtedly prayed or sang loyally, "God save the king!" Louis XV was King of France in that year and Germany was a group of independent states not to be unified for a century

[ 8 ]

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

and a half. George Washington was not to be born for six years, and Napoleon for forty-three. When this Church was organized, only sixteen of the fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence had yet been born; and the Church was already fifty years old when the Declaration was made.

In 1726, New England congregations were called to the Meeting-House by the beating of a drum, the blowing of a conch shell or a horn, displaying a flag, firing a gun, or if the community was fortunate enough to have one, by the "wringing of a bell." Since the Norwalk Church used a "drumb", probably a drum was also used in Wilton at the beginning.

As the call came, families near the Meeting-House started out walking in "desent order," man and wife first and other members of the family in twos behind them. Farmers mounted their substantial farm horses, and wife or child rode on a pillion, or cushion, behind.

There is no indication that these early Wiltonians dressed drably when they went to Church. A little later, in fact, the Church no doubt saw "hooped petticoats and laced hoods, and long embroidered gloves," and "velvet coats and satin breeches and embroidered waistcoats, gold lace and sparkling buckles." As to-day, however, the Minister probably wore a black Geneva gown with white bands, as did almost all early Congregational clergymen.

[ 9 ]

1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future. The author points out that the study of history is not only a means of acquiring knowledge, but also a means of developing a sense of responsibility and a sense of civic duty.

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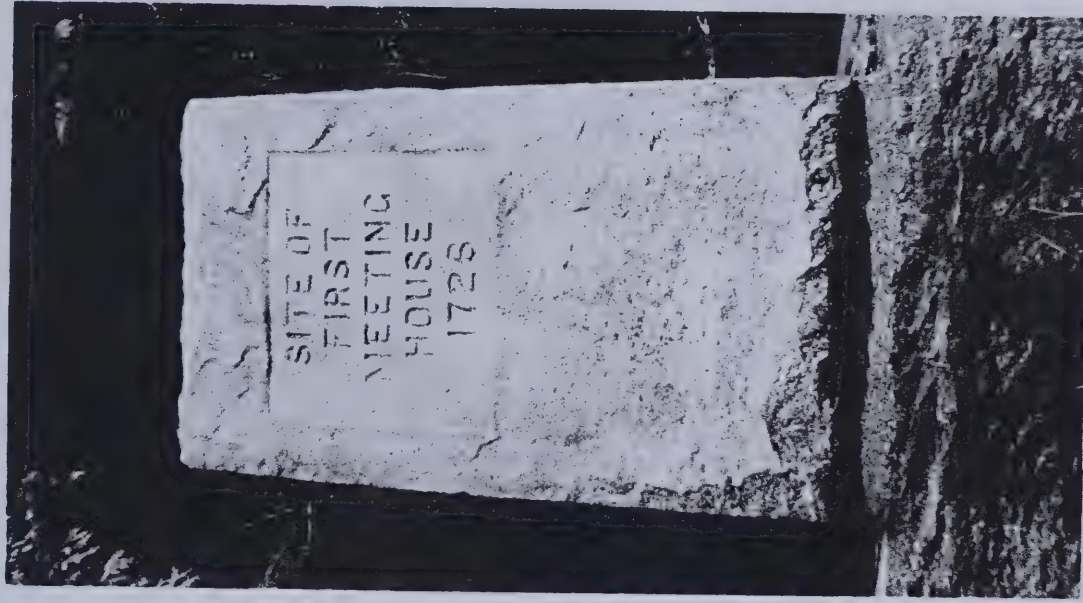
## WILTON PARISH

In Norwalk during the first year of the new Parish, the affair of the Reverend Mr. Buckingham had come to an unedifying conclusion. His thunders against his wayward congregation were reinforced in 1727 by a great earthquake which convinced many of their sins. "Considering the frowns of heaven upon them," the Norwalk Church set "a day for the humbling and abasing their souls before the Lord by fasting and prayer for redress." But the retreat was short-lived. The next week a meeting terminated Mr. Buckingham's ministry.

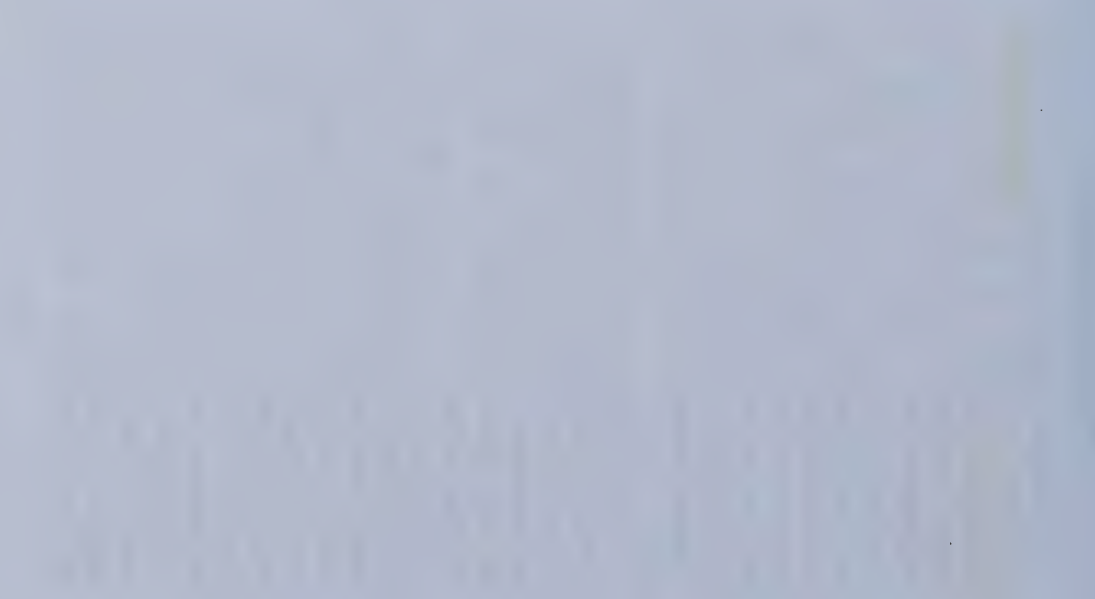
In spite of this nearby example, the Wilton Parish promptly got itself into difficulties when it chose its first Minister. Almost as much mystery surrounds the shortcomings of the Reverend Mr. Robert Sturgeon as the Reverend Mr. Buckingham.

Mr. Sturgeon was apparently educated in Scotland, but for unknown reasons the Presbytery there declined to give him a license to preach. Though referred to in the records as "the Reverend," he had possibly not been ordained. Shortly after arriving in Massachusetts in 1721, he got into the bad graces of the famous and influential Cotton Mather. Having left his home "under some embarrassments," he was nevertheless licensed in New England, "greatly to the regret of the Reverend Mr. Cotton Mather, by reason of his conduct

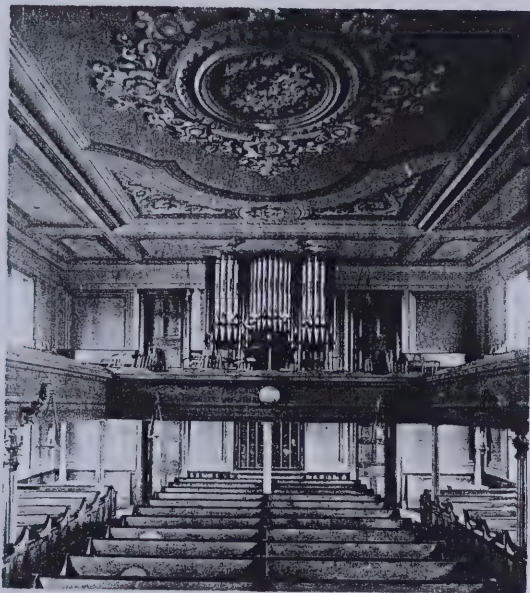
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MARKER ON WOLF PIT ROAD



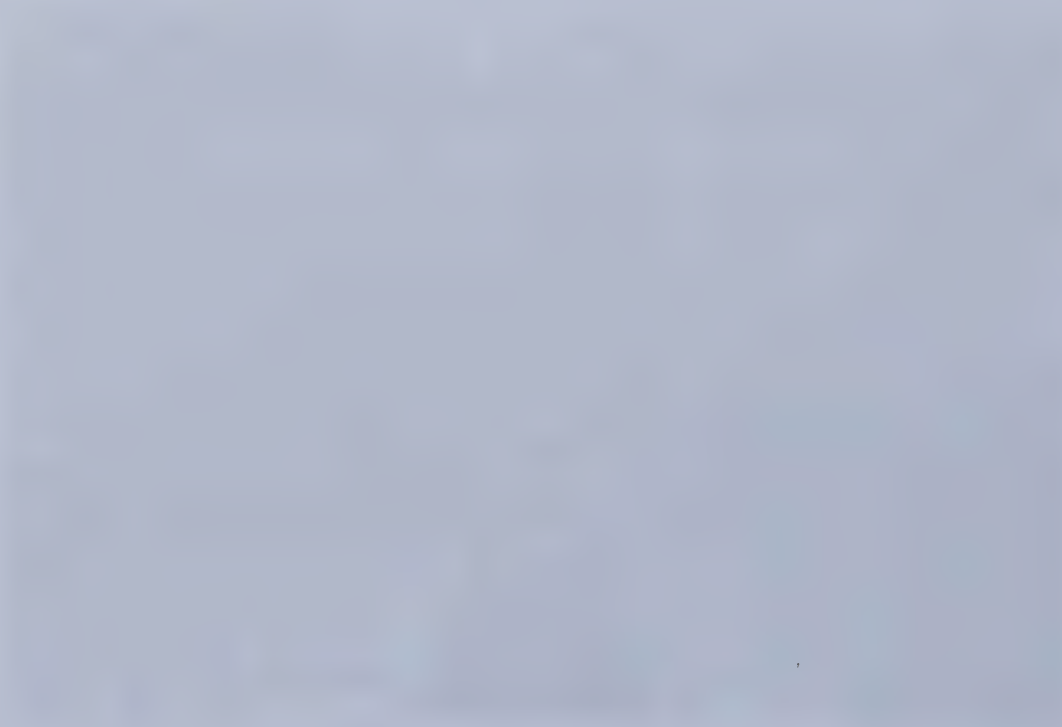




THE INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO



THE INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH AT CHRISTMAS TIME 1949











## WILTON PARISH

ulations about adherence to professed principles.

In calling him, the Parish had agreed to pay ninety pounds and give him "a full supply of firewood for his family's use . . . to be brought to his habitation from time to time as is needed." Five acres were also granted for a "house lot" (lot).

But it appears that the Congregation lagged in getting in the wood. Perhaps Mr. Sturgeon suffered from the cold. At any rate, five days before Christmas that first year, the Society voted that "every man shall bring unto the Reverend Mr. Sturgeon a load of wood within fourteen days" and set a three-shilling fine for failure.

This must not have worked too well, for the next December, the Society voted to make payments to those who brought wood. A year later, Ebenezer Jackson was granted nine pounds to furnish enough wood to Mr. Sturgeon for a year. Finally, in 1730, abandoning the generalities, the Society voted that he should have twenty-eight cords of wood a year.

Meantime, dissatisfaction with the "life and conversation" of Mr. Sturgeon increased, and in 1731 a Council was called to consider his dismissal. There is no record of a vote of termination, but his ministry must soon have ended, for the next spring steps were being

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## HISTORICAL SKETCH

taken to get a new Minister.

After giving him a three-week's trial, the Society now extended a call to the Reverend Mr. William Gaylord, 22-year-old graduate of Yale College. Born in Hartford, he was on his father's side the great-grandson of a Deacon who arrived in Massachusetts from England in 1631, and on his mother's side the great-grandson of the Reverend Mr. Samuel Stone, long a colleague of Thomas Hooker at Hartford.

Perhaps because he had heard about the slow wood deliveries to Mr. Sturgeon, the new young Minister delayed in answering the call. At any rate, six weeks later, a new committee was appointed "to treat with Mr. Gaylord as to terms of settlement and salary." His pay was set at sixty-five pounds, to be paid in money or provisions, another call was given, and he accepted.

For more than its first century, the Church had the custom of voting a 200-pound "settlement" to a young Minister to enable him to buy a house, land, furniture, books and whatever else he needed for his life and work. Remembering Mr. Sturgeon's religious ideas, and realizing it could not often afford such a settlement, the Society provided that "if Mr. Gaylord turn from ye opinion or principles he now professes, contrary to ye mind of ye Society, then he is to return to ye Society ye

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## WILTON PARISH

two hundred pounds again."

A Council convened in February, 1733, and examined Mr. Gaylord's beliefs carefully, and he was ordained. So he began a pastorate of nearly thirty-four years, longer than any other of the Church and, with two exceptions, double the length of any other.

Mr. Gaylord's character has been memorialized by the careful records he kept for the Church from 1733 until 1766.

"He was methodical and exact," said the Reverend Mr. Samuel G. Willard in his scholarly 150th Anniversary Address. "He was sound in faith, not a man of extreme views, and probably would be reckoned a moderate Calvinist. His epitaph in Sharp Hill Cemetery reads:

"Here lies Interred ye Body of the Revd. William Gaylord who departed this life Janry. ye 2d 1767 in the 58th Year of His Age and 35th of his Ministry

He was an able Divine a faithfull Minister  
& a meek & humble Christian. his Love  
for Souls was very great; in proof of  
which he Spent his life in unwearied  
indeavours for ye Conversion of Sinners  
and Edification of Saints, & among  
many other Excilences, he Eminently  
merited ye Character of a Peace maker,  
& is now undoubtedly reaping ye Reward  
of Such in the Kingdom of his Lord."

Whatever his other virtues, Mr. Gaylord

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## HISTORICAL SKETCH

had the reputation of being a dull speaker. There is a story that, when he once preached at Ridgefield, the Congregation found the sermon uninteresting. Later, the Ridgefield Minister borrowed the sermon and preached it, without comment, to the same people. When the Congregation praised it as superior to Mr. Gaylord's from the same text, the Minister replied that "he could always preach well when he could get one of Mr. Gaylord's sermons to preach."

Just before his ordination, Mr. Gaylord was married to the daughter of a Stamford Pastor, and after bearing seven children, she died 14 years later of pulmonary tuberculosis. On the Church records, her husband carefully recorded his eulogy of her as "a good wife to me, both in spirituals and temporals, prudent, faithful, loving, loyal, and very respectful." Perhaps the latter words indicated something of the century's beliefs about the subservience of woman to her husband. In any case, women have a very small role in the written records of the early Church. In the year Mr. Gaylord became Pastor, the records show that women outnumbered men in the membership—forty-one women in full communion, to thirty-five men.

However, for more than a year, a Mrs. B and a Miss Polly C, did occupy the attention of the Deacons. A pair of spectacles had been

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THE  
FEDERAL  
BUREAU OF  
INVESTIGATION  
UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20535

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI  
FROM : SAC, NEW YORK  
SUBJECT: [Illegible]  
[Illegible]



## WILTON PARISH

lost, and one accused the other of stealing them! A final entry in the records states that "nothing more shall be said of it."

Mr. Gaylord married again, and his family grew to a total of thirteen children. But death, which had taken one of his first children in early childhood, continued to bring tragedy into the Minister's family. He recorded the death of two young daughters, Elizabeth and Sarah, from "a sore Grievous consumptive illness." And Colonial warfare brought death to his 20-year old son, Moses, who had just "been from home in ye expedition ag'st Mont-real a little more than four month." From this family, however, it would not be accurate to conclude that in the early days of the Wilton Church its members married early, had many children, and died at early ages. There was an average of only 4.5 deaths per year during the first dozen years of Mr. Gaylord's ministry, and of 6.8 per year during the next ten.

If Mr. Gaylord was a dull Preacher, he seems nevertheless to have drawn crowds. The Congregation grew, and soon the Parish felt it needed a larger Meeting-House. In the fourth year of Mr. Gaylord's ministry, (December, 1736), it was voted that a new Meeting-House "be built on ye Sharp Hill, with ye fore or broad side directly to the South." This location, on the east side of Danbury Road at

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## HISTORICAL SKETCH

Sharp Hill Road, is marked today by the old cemetery which accompanied it.

The new building was modeled after "ye prime antient" Meeting-House of Norwalk (which was probably the one burned by the British four decades later). The pews were six feet square, with the one next to the pulpit stairs reserved for the Deacons and leading men, and with "the two hind seats" set aside for the growing Gaylord flock. The old Meeting-House was sold in 1739 "att a vandue [auction—*ed.*] at sun one hour high at night." The proceeds were devoted toward finishing the new one. The Land comprising the present Sharp Hill Cemetery was given by John Marven, Sr., and an additional half acre was granted in 1755. The first recorded burial was in 1737. The last was in 1881, with the exception of that in 1934 of the late Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Spencer. This couple, who had been interested in the cemetery's restoration, willed a sum to the Society so that interest could be used for the cemetery's upkeep.

The cemetery was used 91 years after this second Church was abandoned, and 27 years after the present Hillside Cemetery was established.

If today parents find Wilton's schools a major interest, in that early day families also sought an education for their children. From 1712 to 1750 the Parishes or Ecclesiastical

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## WILTON PARISH

Societies in Connecticut had charge of schooling. In the first two years, 1726 to 1728, there is a record that Nathaniel Ketchum of Belden's Hill was hired to teach in "the upper parish." In Wilton a committee of three, including Mr. Ketchum, then named Mr. Sturgeon teacher, to be paid by the "country (tax) money as far as it would go" and by tuition of the pupils. He apparently taught at the parsonage or around at the homes.

This arrangement did not last long. The next year, as the Parish was divided into three districts, it was provided that school was to be taught on Belden's Hill in June and July, in Pimpawaug in August and September, and in Kent and Chestnut Hill "as long as the money holds out!" (In 1792 came the further division into nine school districts—fragmentation which was not overcome until the relatively recent consolidation.)

As the second Meeting-House and cemetery were now completed, another building was built nearby at a cost of thirty pounds, for a Society and school house combined. The records mention the holding of a Society meeting here in 1741.

Members of the Congregation who came from any distance must have found this building even more important as a kind of community center on Sundays. The long morning and afternoon services were held in a Meeting-

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## HISTORICAL SKETCH

House which, in winter, was without heat. But at noon, in this first "Parish House," the families could get together before a fireplace filled with burning logs, eat "pot luck," compare farming notes—and gossip. This building, apparently becoming unnecessary later, was sold two years before the Declaration of Independence.

This concern of the Church with public school matters was only one of many indications of the way government and religion merged in Wilton's early decades.

Today, newcomers have to learn that the "Church" is really two entities—an Ecclesiastical Society, concerned with temporal affairs; and a Church, concerned with spiritual affairs. This division was made necessary in Colonial New England because Churches were not allowed to become incorporated bodies, the feeling being that this would involve them in worldly matters. The Society, therefore, levied the taxes for the support of the Church as well as for the maintenance of the cemetery, the schools, the roads, and the militia. This arrangement lasted for almost a century until the new State Constitution of Connecticut separated Church and State in 1818, after which time Churches were incorporated if they so desired and were supported from that time on by voluntary contributions. The Wilton Church through the years has elected to keep its Ecclesiastical

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Society.

The mingling of Society and State was plain in the original charter about a "Village enjoying Parrish Privileges," to be known "by the name of Wilton Parrish." In fact, the Ecclesiastical Society was organized first; it arranged for the building of the first Meeting-House; then it hired a Pastor—and not till then was the Church organized.

In its first spring (1727), one of the Wilton Society's earliest acts was to vote "to be free of training" under officers at Norwalk and to set up the Village's own company of militia. The schoolman, Ketchum, became leader of the band, first as lieutenant, then as captain. All the Colonial men from 16 to 55 were liable for service and required to possess a musket, rest, sword and bandolier. They trained at 8 o'clock in the morning during three spring and three fall months.

This company became the seventh in the Ninth Regiment during the fighting at mid-century, and meantime, Wilton contributed also to the "troop of horse" in the same regiment.

Throughout the 1700's, France and England were involved in a struggle of power and, on this side of the Atlantic, their clash over possession of the lands to the West resulted in the French and Indian War. From 1755 to 1758, Connecticut raised 13,500 men for this

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war. The records indicate that five Wilton men were killed in this fighting. One was the Reverend Mr. Gaylord's son, previously mentioned.

During the Revolutionary War, Wilton sent 300 men to the Continental Army. The war itself came to Wilton in April, 1777, during the British drive to burn the depot at Danbury. The Wiltonians having gathered through the night, they formed a line at the bridge near the site of the present St. Matthew's Church. Some shots were fired and some British captured but, flanking the Wiltonians by crossing the river at Mill Road, the main body of the British marched off to Saugatuck by way of the present Dudley Road. The term "Tory Hole," still in use, refers to a place down Lovers' Lane behind the Church, which dates from this episode. Several Wilton houses were fired but none destroyed, for the retreat was too fast. It is recounted that, before the British were out of sight, a woman went with a pail of water from a neighboring home and put out flames set to a house near the militia's line. Nearby, a Tory woman and her Indian slave also were helping put out a fire in a barn where Continental stores had been kept.

The British made calls at several homes to request food. They appear to have secured this without incident, except perhaps at the home on Drum Hill of Deacon Daniel Gregory,

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## WILTON PARISH

whose aged mother shook a poker at the intruders "to show them which side I was on."

The story has come down of another woman, Mary Cole, who acted courageously during this war when she heard that her husband was sick or wounded at White Plains. Braving the possibilities of meeting the British or the "cow-boys" on the New York-Connecticut "border," she rode over on horseback and brought him back to Wilton "on the same steed."

It was commonly believed that the lead statue of King George III at Bowling Green, New York City, was taken to Litchfield, Conn., and melted down into bullets to greet his soldiers. However, digging in Wilton years later revealed that at least part of it had been secretly buried here. Four hundred twenty-five pounds of lead were turned up, and presumably more may still lie in the Town's soil to this day.

The only other Revolutionary War incident involving Wilton came in the summer of 1779, when British raiders from the sea burned Norwalk. Wilton's third Minister, the Reverend Mr. Isaac Lewis, who had succeeded Mr. Gaylord and had in 1776 been chaplain of a Connecticut regiment, headed a company of men which went to Norwalk at that time. A cannon ball struck within three feet of him—but after the attempt to sack Wilton, even this must have seemed anti-climactic to the

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## HISTORICAL SKETCH

Parish.

Mr. Lewis served the Church from 1768 to 1786—from the early days of complaint about the tax on tea to the latter days of the Articles of Confederation, and the battles of the Revolution. After a ministry of eighteen years, he was dismissed in a dispute over baptism and Church membership, and he became a Pastor at Greenwich for thirty-two years.

For eight years following, the Church could not agree upon a Minister who would accept. Several calls were issued, but perhaps because of the divisions and the small salary, no Minister would come until the Reverend Aaron Woodworth of Coventry, a recent Yale graduate, accepted and was ordained in 1794.

One of the most remarkable events in the Church's history was the erection of the present Meeting-House during this period of uncertainty without a settled Pastor!

In 1773, a vote had been taken to build a new Meeting-House. The Sharp Hill building was getting into bad repair, and the center of population had shifted further north. On Dec. 28, 1789, a decision was reached to erect it "on the Hill at the South Easterly part of Daniel Gregory's woodland." The Church was built with public funds, instead of by voluntary contributions, a special tax being levied over ten years to pay for it.

As far as possible, timbers of the old Church

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## WILTON PARISH

were used in building the new one during the year 1790. The pulpit and seats were also transferred, and employed for thirteen years. The foundation stones of the old Meeting-House were used in fencing the Sharp Hill Cemetery.

There were three aisles in the Church originally, and the ceiling was arched. Four large pillars supported the galleries. Two pillars also supported a lofty, conical and ornamented sounding-board above the high pulpit. This sounding board was "painted a beautiful blue, with gilt bands and a bouquet of grain in gilt."

The Parish voted not to build a steeple unless "any man or men would build it at their own expense;" but somehow it was built. There is no record of a bell until 1801.

In spite of the tradition of the early white frame Church of New England, it was voted to paint this "with yellow ochre, and the roof Spanish brown." But happily, the new Meeting-House was actually painted white.

As the cornerstone indicates, the Meeting-House was dedicated in 1790 in December. The sermon was preached by the Reverend Mr. Timothy Dwight, who later became President of Yale. He took as his text the exclamation of Jacob after he had wrestled with the angel, "How dreadful is this place! This is but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!"

This Meeting-House is the oldest in Fairfield

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## HISTORICAL SKETCH

County and one of the dozen oldest in the State.

During its long history, the pulpit has been filled by many distinguished visiting clergymen: The Reverend Mr. Josiah Sherman, Wilton-born brother of a signer of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution; the Reverend Mr. Zachariah Lewis, tutor to George Washington's family, and the Reverend Mr. Moses Stuart, also born in Wilton, the first great Hebrew scholar of the country.

Signaled by a growing dissatisfaction with some of the rigid rules of the past, the time had now come when a break with the early Colonial customs was inevitable. Church domination of the Town's life was no longer feasible. So, in the year 1802, two major steps were taken to transform the Colonial Wilton into a modern community much more as it is today. The State legislature in this year incorporated what had been the "Parish of Wilton" into a Town, and thereafter public Town business was no longer transacted in the Meeting-House. Now marriages and deaths were recorded in books of the Town.

Growing interest in other denominations also culminated in the formation of Wilton's second Church. With a liberal attitude toward other groups, the Wilton Church as early as 1764 had abated the tax for the Minister's support owed by Mr. Whelpley, "so long as

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## WILTON PARISH

he attends the Baptist meeting and no longer." After 1772 the Society's collector turned over to the rector of St. Paul's Protestant Episcopal Parish in Norwalk the Minister's "rate" collected from that Church's members in Wilton.

Now members of this Norwalk Parish, on July 1, 1802, established St. Matthew's Parish. Interestingly, the civil authority called this organizational meeting, according to the law, and the next year they erected their first Church building.

These important changes in Wilton came during the three-year pastorate of the Reverend Mr. John I. Carle, the Church's fifth Minister. He asked to be dismissed in 1804, but the Society refused such an orderly break and made charges of "irregularities in his Christian life and moral habits." In a word, it disapproved of his drinking. Mr. Carle left anyway and, according to tradition, died in New Jersey, a victim of intemperance.

Heavy and widespread drinking appears to have been the custom during these early decades. In addition to the shoe, hat and textile factories which Wilton had at the beginning of the nineteenth century, five distilleries were operating here. Even when the temperance movement got underway in the Town, it banned only distilled liquors.

By 1829, this reformation had gained enough strength that one man tried to get workmen

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## HISTORICAL SKETCH

to build a barn for him without the aid of alcohol, but so many men refused to complete the work in these dry conditions, that he was obliged to send for strong drink. A few weeks later, however, another man managed to get his barn built without supplying anything stronger than ale. This was said to be the first large building in Wilton to be built without the assistance of hard liquor!

The Church's next Pastor was an enthusiastic supporter of the temperance movement, the Reverend Mr. Haight. He was Minister for 21 years, but his outspoken convictions appear to have made an increasing number of enemies toward the end of his pastorate. In Mr. Wilton's rather quaint language, "perhaps a greater prudence of speech, when silence had been golden, had enabled him longer to escape some of the unfriendliness." Nevertheless he was dismissed in 1831 and thereafter preached in Bethel and South Norwalk and lived a time in Wilton itself.

Dr. Sylvester Willard, a Wilton-born physician, has left a striking impression of this Pastor's towering figure:

"Mr. Haight was a man of quick impulses and ponderous energy . . . His person was massive, his head large, and his skin bronzed. When in after years I saw and heard Daniel Webster, I was greatly impressed with a similarity between them. . . .

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## WILTON PARISH

"I remember the beautiful summer afternoon in August, 1831, when a mere child, I went with my father to hear his farewell sermon. He was in the lofty pulpit of the old Church, which was very high and seemed to my childish eyes a great deal higher than it really was . . . When he concluded his sermon the people wept; his heart was swollen with emotion, and his voice faltered, but with immense power and solemnity he concluded, 'Amen! and amen to this Bible,' at the same time laying his hand with heavy emphasis upon it. I was frightened, and thought the world was coming to an end. On the way home, I remember, I asked my father if there were to be no more Sundays! He replied: 'Yes, but Mr. Haight is not to be our Minister any longer.'"

During Mr. Haight's ministry there had been two powerful revivals, and many families were added to the Church. In the Church at large during this period, there was a general religious enthusiasm which brought the establishment of Sunday Schools and the foundation of Congregational mission work; and in Wilton, about 1816, a Sunday School was started to offer organized instruction in religion to the Parish children for the first time. Special Sabbath garments and shoes were prepared, and on Sundays the children flocked to the Nathan Davenport home to put them on and march in order to Sunday School, and later they would

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## HISTORICAL SKETCH

return to the house, exchange the new garments for their old ones, and go on to their homes.

One of the first steps after the installation of Mr. Haight's successor, the Reverend Mr. Samuel Merwin, was the construction of the present parsonage in 1832-3. The lot was purchased from Nathan Comstock with funds made available through the sale of a piece of property and a gift of \$800 previously willed to the Church by Deacon Jonathan Middlebrook. Mr. Merwin and his family were the first occupants of the parsonage, which has been in continuous use to the present day. Due to impaired health, Mr. Merwin was dismissed at his own request after a pastorate of six years during which time the Church had a large growth in membership and a deepening of its spiritual life.

The Reverend Mr. John Smith, who had been born in Wethersfield and had studied at Yale, Andover and Princeton, was installed as the new Minister in 1839. He had been an agent of the American Tract Society, and three years after his coming to Wilton, ninety-five persons came into the Church on a single Sunday, most of them by profession of faith. About fifty of them were baptized at the same time. This appears to have been the biggest revival in the Church's two hundred and twenty-five years.

The evangelical interests were carried on

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the social, religious and political order. Magistrates and town representatives alike developed these habits of custom and continuity. And when the composition of the lower house began to change in the seventeenth fifties, with the political rise of the New Lights, basic attitudes towards the settled structure of internal government and established institutional forms were scarcely modified. The New Lights may have sought to remodel the conduct of men, but they never impugned received civic wisdom or challenged accepted thinking on the nature of governmental functions or the credentials required of those entrusted with political authority.

Even after the pro-British Fitch faction's expulsion from office, the notion of fundamental social and political change at home was anathema to their successors. On the contrary, the ideal of preservation symbolized by the Charter was exalted to drive opponents of the new ruling order further into the political wilderness. Satisfaction with the status quo underlay the efforts of Whigs to enlarge the territorial confines of the colony and reproduce her system of government, together with its related social and economic arrangements, beyond New England. The year 1766 not only marked the fall of Fitch and his pro-British councillors, as well as the emergence of a political leadership united on the issue of the colony's rights and zealously promoting American interests, but also signalled the only significant turnover in high political posts within the charter government before or during the Revolution. Whereas in other colonies a conflict of officeholding interests had pitted lesser officials (Whigs) against a favored coterie supporting Britain in places of power, this tension was lacking in Connecticut. True to her reputation

for steadiness, Connecticut's turnover rate of 17.6 per cent in executive positions of government at the outbreak of the Revolution was the lowest in North America.<sup>19</sup>

## 2. The Loyalists

Because Americans of a past generation wished to rationalize smoothly the defeat, removal or speedy assimilation of Loyalists, they equated them with the nonproductive, alien and therefore dispensable elements of colonial society. The democratic tradition of nineteenth-century historiography assigned to supporters of the crown an almost undifferentiated role among the privileged, wealthy and politically powerful--governors, crown placemen, grasping customs officials, rich merchants and imperious churchmen--completely out of step with the sentiments of the people. Recent historical writing, however, has gone far to correct and clarify the picture and broaden the lines of inquiry for future researchers.<sup>20</sup> Loyalists were not a monolithic body set

apart from the masses, consistently pursuing interests that were identifiably those of the crown. In fact, group appellations are as misleading with reference to the Loyalists as are discussions of eighteenth-century politics in conventional party terms. Actually, Tories, often the victims of Whig propaganda, did not always recognize their collective identity. Frequently individualistic in outlook, they usually failed to act in concert, lacked a coherent program and rarely subscribed to political doctrines commanding their common assent.

One of the most important insights of modern investigators is that Loyalism was a reflex, rather than an extrinsic feature, of the socioeconomic structure. Toryism was not only a mode of behavior



dictated by over a hundred fifty years of colonial tradition and experience; it could be characterized as a state of mind, since inertia and passivity are more congenial to some men than action and commitment.<sup>21</sup> Loyalism was integrated into the colonial political, social and economic system, existing as an organic part of it. Certainly admirers of the crown's historic function were not limited to any single class, occupation or religious denomination. In Connecticut, where they were found at every socioeconomic level and at most layers of political authority, Tories, though relatively small in number, moved at the heart of the community. "I never imagined, till informed by your Last," a shocked Joseph Fish expressed this inclusiveness in a letter to his son-in-law, General Gold Selleck Silliman, who commanded the Whig forces in Fairfield County, "the deluded, infatuated, bewit[c]hed Tories, gone from you and remaining Still among you, were half so numerous & so interwoven with Friends to our Cause. . . ." <sup>22</sup>

The manner in which the Loyalists' creed permeated the fabric of Connecticut's social and economic life from their regional bases mainly in central Fairfield and coastal towns along the Sound might be judged from the range and diversity of their occupations. Indeed, those occupations extended from one end of the social spectrum to the other. In sum, Tories were wealthy and humble lawyers, well-to-do and struggling farmers, customs officials, Anglican ministers, merchants of various degrees of affluence, shopkeepers, physicians, doctors, hatters, breeches-makers, millers, weavers, cobblers, blacksmiths, silversmiths, printers, jewellers, schoolteachers, innkeepers, mariners, coopers, shoemakers (cordwainers), tanners, carpenters, masons, joiners, auctioneers, boatbuilders, tailors, carmen, grocers,

refiners of iron, laborers and blacks.<sup>23</sup> Even artists were not excluded from Tory ranks.<sup>24</sup> The vast majority were American born, although a few immigrants, mostly artisans and small traders, fled to the British after hostilities began. Among the Anglican clerical body only Mathew Graves, a Manxman, was born outside the colonies, while English and Scottish officials manned the unpopular New London custom service.<sup>25</sup>

The incomes and wealth of Loyalists as a group did not stand significantly above the colony's norms;<sup>23</sup> and it is not surprising to find, in a province committed to Whiggism before 1775, a reluctance in British sympathizers at the top of the Connecticut social and political hierarchy to take sides openly. This cautious spirit imbued the colony's professional class, by and large,<sup>27</sup> and in general the high the Loyalist stood on the socioeconomic and political scale, the more repugnant the prospect of civil conflict appeared to him. The revolutionary careers of Connecticut's most celebrated legal practitioners, Jared Ingersoll--"our Characteristic prayer being 'Lo give us peace in our day'"<sup>28</sup>--and Dr. Samuel Johnson's able son, William Samuel, both Loyalists of the appeasement variety at the out of revolution and Whigs by its conclusion, reinforces the point.

Similar reasons led Johnson and Ingersoll to support Britain tentatively in 1775. a deep respect for English laws and the English Constitution and an affection for the people and institutions of Britain, which both had visited as colonial agents. Above all, they shared a conviction that Imperial order and peace depended upon Parliament's political supremacy: that independence would lead inexorably to anarchy and ruthless exploitation by foreign powers.





Both Loyalists, moreover, possessed the conservative philosophy of men of property and position, together with a dislike of extremist solutions sanctioned by neither law nor precedent.

Johnson had used both the connections of his Long Island mother and those of his Yale College days to build a legal practice stretching from the prosperous and prestigious New York aristocracy, with its mercantile and landed elements, to the fashionable seaboard society of his native Connecticut. Meanwhile, Ingersoll, elevated by the crown to the dignity of Judge of the King's Vice-Admiralty Court in the Middle Colonies at Philadelphia on a substantial salary of £600 a year, could be classed as a member of the colonial ruling elite. Indeed, of the two, Ingersoll, a former King's Attorney, ill-fated Stamp distributor and prominent critic of Whig expansionism, was the more assertive champion of British authority (his conversion to the patriot cause appears to have come after Johnson's).<sup>29</sup>

The Stratford lawyer, on the other hand, had been more closely associated with Connecticut politics at the highest level, having come to the notice of the anti-British faction by his bold advocacy of colonial rights in 1765-66. He had won a place on the Council, according to Ezra Stiles, through a bargain made by the Anglicans with the Sons of Liberty,<sup>30</sup> and used his influence within the governmental structure thereafter to preach restraint and moderation to the Whig leadership. As a councillor, he steered a middle course, showing his concern for the Charter in a way pleasing to Whig opinion and deftly neutralizing or avoiding emotionally charged issues.<sup>31</sup> In the arts of compromise he had few peers; but the attempt to reach an accommodation, achieved so brilliantly by Anglicans in the religious sphere, to make

the existing machinery function more responsive to British and American needs, was insufficient in the ruptured state of Anglo-American relations.<sup>32</sup> That total breakdown made Johnson ineffective and irrelevant in 1775-1776.

The lawyer's friend, Benjamin Gale, the fiery politician Killingsworth, who when a boy had been tutored by the senior Johns held similar views upon the relationship between Britain and her colonies. Actually Gale and William Samuel Johnson had both announced their intention to remain neutral in the event of an armed clash back as 1769. Gale, however, the colony's most distinguished physician, a scientist and inventor who had received honors in England and made an altogether different impact upon contemporaries. Abrasiv forthright rather than charming and accommodating, he never concealed his loathing for the New Lights and Sons of Liberty. The prospective Whigs, his arch political enemies, exercising uncontrolled supremacy at home horrified one who had spent most of his public life in belaboring their policies. He had argued forcefully and at length against expansionism, and was profoundly unsettled by the mode of resistance to the mother country. What he regarded as the anti-faction's plots, rigged elections and caballing were simply stratagems by upstarts to fling the world into chaos.<sup>33</sup>

Gale, of course, had his own reasons for opposing a compromise with Britain, which he valued for his scientific and professional recognition. Nevertheless, although his regard for the mother country was not uncritical--with moderate Tories everywhere had vigorously assailed British colonial measures after 1764--the revolutionary developments in Connecticut left him stunned at



fearful of the future. Like William Samuel Johnson, he had vainly solicited a crown appointment<sup>34</sup>--as had former governor Fitch, former councillor Silliman and others--to fill the void that stretched ahead. Individualist though he was, Gale faced the same dilemma as every conservative member of the colony's upper socioeconomic and political stratum: unable to envision an order of government without the traditional bases of authority, he could only bend before the storm or be broken by it.

Other well-to-do Loyalists addressed themselves to the problem of shoring up their waning authority in the community and moderating the headlong Whiggish course towards separation from Britain. One of the pillars of New Haven's conservative government, the lawyer Joshua Chandler, served as chairman of the local committee of correspondence, assemblyman, selectman and justice of the peace until his removal from those offices. Chandler was inordinately wealthy by Connecticut standards--his estate was worth about £10,000--and with his friend Jared Ingersoll, manipulated, temporarily and to a limited degree, a powerful nexus of local landed and mercantile interests on behalf of the crown.<sup>35</sup>

The British closely studied the revolutionary disposition of New Haven, for its concentration of Loyalist wealth, professional and community influence, far exceeding that of any other town in the colony, delayed the advance of Whig authority there. Yet time would show that New Haveners were unwilling to push their pro-British efforts beyond the point of internal resistance. Indeed, no Connecticut town demonstrated more fully that social and economic privilege begot neutralism during the Revolution than New Haven. Among the notables in

its Tory faction, Chandler's lawyer son-in-law Amos Botsford, whose clients included Benedict Arnold, as contentious a Whig as anybody the start of hostilities, was earning £600 a year (a clear income £225 after family expenses had been deducted) until he was barred from professional practice in 1776. Meanwhile, Abiathar Camp, a determined opponent of the patriots, was also "reckoned an opulent man" who "carried on very considerable business," averaging £200 a year as a merchant.<sup>36</sup>

Practically all Connecticut's Loyalist figures of authority and prestige attended Yale College. In addition to Jared Ingersoll, William Samuel Johnson, Benjamin Gale, Joshua Chandler, Amos Botsford and Abiathar Camp, the affluent Wallingford lawyer Hall, who lost property estimated at £20,000, was a graduate.<sup>37</sup> roll of alumni also included such names as Thomas Fitch, the for governor, George Wyllys, the colonial secretary, Thomas Darling, New Haven justice of the peace, and Benjamin Woodbridge, a respect Old Light who made his recognition of the Whig government conditional upon Independence. Furthermore, county sheriffs (Windham's Eleazar Fitch), merchants of prominence like Ralph Isaacs of New Haven and wealthy farmers, in the person of John Still Winthrop at New London (also a justice of the peace), held Yale degrees.<sup>38</sup>

About a half of these graduates had made their mark in politics,<sup>39</sup> and roughly the same proportion had registered success in the legal profession. This group generally represented the college's best-educated and most articulate Loyalists, as well as those who, on the socioeconomic scale, but they never formed a cadre capable of directing and coordinating Tory resistance. The possession of





material advantages and a secure niche in the Connecticut power structure, or at least its outer limits, did not encourage overt participation in an unpopular cause. Admittedly, some Yale men (Joshua Chandler, Abiathar Camp, Ralph Isaacs, John Still Winthrop and Eleazar Fitch) gave a certain amount of trouble to Whig authorities; but of the College's twenty-five Loyalist graduates alive during the Revolution, the majority showed marked inhibitions in declaring for the King. Yale was predominantly a Whiggish institution during the war; for the twenty-five Loyalists among its graduate body, there were about 975 patriots. A few activist with a College background, nonetheless, bore arms in British regiments or fought under the crown's authority. Joshua Chandler's second son William (class of 1773), who with his brother acted as guide to a British force attacking New Haven in 1779, raised a company of over a hundred men for George III's service; and twenty-one-year-old John Jones, a captain of marines, was killed a few months after graduation while on his first tour of duty.<sup>40</sup>

The roots of Eleazar Fitch's Toryism, by contrast, probably lay in recollections of past British service. The Windham High Sheriff, who had been estranged from practically all his neighbors by a commercial boycott instituted in 1774, deliberately jeopardized his high office, prestige and wealth in the most Whiggish of Connecticut's counties. A French and Indian War veteran, Fitch had traded upon an impressive military reputation (he was a regimental commander and Putnam's superior in the campaigns of 1759 and 1760) to secure election to the General Assembly after his appointment as sheriff of Windham County. His ties with the Whig power structure were strengthened by his expanded mercantile interests when a partnership in the firm of "Trumble, Fitch

and Trumble" brought him into close business and political relations with the future Revolutionary governor.

Although the wealth accruing from his mercantile and political power enabled Fitch to purchase an elegant mansion on Zion Hill, Windham, the fortunes of the former soldier appear to have reached their apogee in the late seventeenth sixties. For a number of heavy losses at sea caused the collapse of the trading house and severely damaged Fitch, who supplied most of the capital.<sup>41</sup> As a result, not only was the Windham High Sheriff financially embarrassed, but the misadventure seems to have diminished his regard for the Trumbulls. Whether the deterioration in their relations was because Fitch held former partners responsible for his losses or because of the increasingly anti-British tenor of the colony's political leadership after the Stamp Act crisis, or a combination of both, is uncertain. All events, the Revolution found Fitch an outspoken Tory and openly disrespectful of Whig authorities.

A pattern of defiance, courageous but futile, marked the Windham official's revolutionary career. Having denounced aid to Boston, he was proclaimed an enemy to Whiggism; but despite this dubious status, he is reported to have been offered by Governor Trumbull, and flatly rejected, high command in the patriot army when fighting began.<sup>42</sup> Fitch's resistance to the Whig order, though passive, was certainly emphatic and verbally explicit. The decision of the revolutionary government to send British prisoners war in sizeable numbers to Windham County Jail, where Fitch served custodian, elicited an explosive response. Fitch's recorded language so untypical of Tory Yale graduates in positions of authority, was



charged with the personal bitterness of long standing. The governor and his magisterial colleagues, he fulminated, "might take his Commission . . . & wipe their damned asses with it."<sup>43</sup>

Such temerity may have been the posturing of an offended patriarch reflecting his sense of betrayal by fellow "insiders" within Connecticut's governing class. Different motives, however, actuated the Windham High Sheriff's Tory neighbors who were not natives of the colony and never aspired to a place in its power structure. A quondam soldier and merchant like Eleazar Fitch, the migrant from Rhode Island, Godfrey Malbone, was a Brooklyn squire of soaring social pretensions and one of the largest property holder in Connecticut. Master of farmland stretching over three thousand acres, with its cows, horses, sheep, swine, goats and Negro slaves, the Harvard College and Oxford University-trained Malbone, who had founded an Anglican church to underscore his independent and superior station, contemptuously detached himself from Whig politics. In an area where Israel Putnam was a folk hero Malbone was allowed to shelter behind his princely establishment. Throughout the war, however, his refusal to cooperate with local civic and military officials was dearly bought.<sup>44</sup>

Also without roots in the community, rich New York merchants and businessmen as well as Bostonians and British subjects residing outside Connecticut owned estates in Windham and Litchfield Counties, smaller tracts of land scattered around New London and New Haven Counties, a potash works and a Hartford tannery. But while Fitch and Malbone remained in Connecticut as curious though innocuous symbols of social and political deviance, living in embattled seclusion, the New York, Bostonian and British Tory landlords were not present to

defend their property. Their holdings, therefore, quickly fell the hands of Whig legal officers and other specially designated officials charged with the duty of confiscating, administering and selling Tory estates. Nor are other examples of absentee Loyalist ownership lacking. The General Assembly was informed, for instance, that nonresident Tories controlled over 7 per cent of the land in Union, Windham County—a scene of furious Whig zeal in 1774.<sup>45</sup>

### 3. The Social and Economic Background

While certain cases proved its limited validity, the stereotyped view of Loyalism as a derivative of landed interest social influence, political power and Imperial connections is true for Connecticut. Such a view indeed may be understandable it is recalled that Connecticut's Tory upper class supplied son leadership up to 1776. Thereafter, however, the truism, nurtured patriotic nineteenth-century historiography and revolutionary for has little meaning, because in Connecticut, pro-British activity and large, became more purposeful and dynamic as one moved down socioeconomic scale. The colony's privileged Loyalist element generally paralyzed by their wealth and connections as the flow revolutionary events trapped them in a circumstantial net of misinformation and indecision.

In any case, British appeals for support frequently went to men not overburdened with civic responsibilities and proper interests; such appeals had a persuasiveness for those with little stake in society. But lordly attitudes struck by a few opposition Whig authority after 1776, and eagerly chronicled by historians





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helped to foster the legend of Loyalism as the sole prerogative of arrogant, class-conscious panjandruns. Supported by the slenderest evidence, anecdotes concerning Godfrey Malbone's propounding the theory of human inequality to a Whig official and William Heron's disdainful references to the ordinary people as "the underbrush," to be kept down at all costs, gained currency among later generations. Heron and Isaac Welles Shelton (known as "Tory" Shelton), who incensed his neighbors at Bristol by keeping slaves after hostilities, survived the Revolution for many years. Their reputations shaped later judgments upon Toryism as a whole; thus an aspect of revolutionary mythology was perpetuated.<sup>46</sup>

Certainly a small number of Loyalist landowners qualified as very well to do by Connecticut standards,<sup>47</sup> but the overall reality of Tory pedigree and opulence, measured in terms of open identification with and active support of the crown is less striking. Of the three hundred heads of Connecticut families who settled in Canada after the war, only two described themselves as "Gentlemen." A mere thirty-five heads of Tory families possessed the inclination or could raise the money to make a pilgrimage to England--supposedly the center of eighteenth-century culture and progress--during the whole of the troubled decade from 1774 to 1784. This figure was the second lowest of all the rebelling colonies. Samuel Peters, a refugee in England since 1774, claimed knowledge of and acquaintance with only nine former Connecticut residents in the mother country ten years later (two Englishmen, two Scotsmen, an Irishman and four natives of the colony). Only 16 per cent of the colony's 150 Loyalist supplicants registered claims of £2000 or over with the British Government after hostilities while almost 50 per cent requested amounts up to but not exceeding

£500.<sup>48</sup> Clearly the dynamic of Connecticut Loyalism lay in social strata beneath the top 10 per cent of the population that engrossed to 25 per cent of the colony's property and wealth.

Connecticut's dominant middle class, with its upper and lower levels, provides the key to some of the strongest Loyalist impulses the colony. Contemporary allusions to the broad influence of such a group did not stop with Samuel Peters. One observer during the war divided the social order into rich farmers, middling farmers, mechan day laborers and poor, while another, painting a gloomier picture and sharply contradicting Joseph Trumbull, classified Connecticut inhabitants as those so poor that they could pay no taxes, the rest the poor, the neither rich nor poor, and the rich.<sup>49</sup> Tories were identified with the "middling Sort" as early as the Susquehanna dispute in 1774,<sup>50</sup> and were much in evidence in the agricultural interest during the Revolution. While few farmers, Whig or Tory, equal the wealth or family name of John Still Winthrop, of New London who sent his son into the royal navy,<sup>51</sup> the fertile soil of Fairfield County gave a number of Tory property holders an above-average status and prosperity.

Gershom Lockwood, of Greenwich, for example, owned real estate and personal property worth £1,839; Raymond Selleck's estate was even more valuable. Their fellow townsman, Joseph Galpin, valued his 15 acres at £1,264 New York currency, just as the Lyons of Redding, Joseph and Joseph--the latter possessing 163 acres--were, in the phrase of time, "men of considerable property."<sup>52</sup> Josiah Stebbins, "a thriving man in good circumstances," with Ridgefield property totalling about 200 acres, and Benjamin Vaughan of New Fairfield, who owned an estate





of similar size, also enjoyed reputations for comfortable means.<sup>53</sup>

The majority of Tories drawn from the farming community of Redding and adjacent towns who had subscribed to the "Redding Loyalist Association" appear to have owned property. Forty-two of the seventy-four Redding residents were rate-paying freeholders; and probably most of the remaining thirty-two subscribers belonged to the same families.<sup>54</sup> Elsewhere, Stamford, Norwalk and Danbury farmers,

especially, were noted as well to do. Indeed, using the first town as a model, an examination of fifty-five Loyalists showing the assessed value of the property revealed that no fewer than thirty-two (mostly farmers) had assessments that placed them in the upper-middle class.

The Reverend Ebenezer Diblee confirmed this degree of local prosperity after the war when he disclosed that the "best" support of his church had crumbled when many "reputable" families in Stamford fled to the British.<sup>55</sup>

Fairfield County, however, did not have a monopoly of Loyalist farmers with substantial means. In addition to holding farmland of 113 acres appraised at £1000, an estate in Kent, "good stock & good furniture," Daniel Smith, of New Milford, Litchfield County, was proprietor of 2,000 acres in the Susquehannah territory, which, as the son of one of the patentees (an anomalous position for a Loyalist), he had purchased in 1770. Smith's neighbor, Sylvanus Bishop, had a Litchfield town estate worth over £550 with well-cultivated land and good stock. Azariah Pritchard, of Derby, New Haven County, also judged to be "in very good circumstances," possessed 673 acres and valuable personal effects such as a sloop and cargo.<sup>56</sup>

Farmers comprised a large segment of Connecticut's middle

class, although the numbers of individuals engaged in a diversity of economic activities often makes clear-cut distinctions along occupational lines somewhat questionable. Certainly the wealth of entrepreneurs, professional men, customs officials and clerical ministers identified as Tories varied sharply. Nonetheless, taken as a group, these non-farmers helped to raise the median for Connecticut Loyalists as a whole to somewhere roughly between £80 and £300 worth of property owned, which was not far removed from the colony's norms.<sup>57</sup>

The Litchfield County manufacturer, Richard Smith, who controlled the Salisbury Iron Works (returned to him after the war), was one of the most affluent Loyalists in northwest Connecticut. The medical practice of Nehemiah Clarke in Hartford yielded that doctor-businessman, whose property assets exceeded £5000, an income of £400 year. This was roughly triple the average colonial doctor's income, which ranged from £100 to £150 per annum.<sup>58</sup>

While Connecticut, of course, never supported a large elite body of royal appointees, she did possess a handful of crown customs officials. Their salaries, ranging from £40 to £80 a year exclusive fees and emoluments, belied the common assumption that direct Imperial connections invariably produced a class of outstanding opulence.

Indeed, the crown's representatives were fortunate if their standard of living reached the level of solid middle-class comfort. Without private means, port officers were heavily dependent upon commissions and moneys accruing to them from the impoundment of vessels and contraband as well as the collection of port fees and other fringe benefits in pursuance of their duties. Duncan Stewart, the New London collector and Isaac Hubbard a native-born Stamford deputy collector



customs officer, nevertheless reported income and property losses of over \$1,500. The case of Stewart particularly demonstrated the ruinous effect of the stoppage of perquisites and extra fees, caused by the Revolution, upon an individual's personal fortunes.<sup>59</sup>

No less damaging was the curtailment of the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel's support to the missionary Anglican clergy for most of the war. Only clergymen like Abraham Jarvis, of Middletown, who received no stipend for his labors because, by contemporary standards, he was extremely well to do, were unaffected by money troubles during the Revolution. The ownership of land in New York, New London and New Haven and the high value of his estate may have helped to account for Jarvis's "reasonable attitude towards the conflict."<sup>60</sup> Other Anglican pastors, with large families to support, often found themselves living on the margins of subsistence.<sup>61</sup>

Even in times of peace, the salaries of Connecticut Anglican clergymen, who, like all missionaries in America, were expected to supplement their meager stipends with "contributions" forwarded by hard-pressed parishioners, never exceeded \$50 a year, although twice that amount was considered a "sufficient support" for a minister by the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel.<sup>62</sup> Economic struggle was one of the crosses borne by the clergy. The plight, however, of Connecticut's Anglican ministers, an indigenous body for the most part, was aggravated by social factors.

Indeed, the Tory clergy's revolutionary experience showed that economic advantages and rank in society were never acquired by some students at Yale College. Connecticut's major educational institution, once considered a hotbed of Anglicanism and religious heterodoxy, had

graduated a succession of Episcopalian ministers (some, of course, had undergone "conversion" after they had left Yale). Thirteen of them, firmly under Dr. Samuel Johnson's spiritual guidance, were installed in Connecticut parishes at the outset of revolution.

Yet the social aggressiveness characteristic of Samuel Peters was generally lacking in most Anglicans as well as in those leading members of the New Haven-based Sandemanian sect who had also received Yale degrees.<sup>63</sup> For Sandemanian and Anglican ministers ranked among the least "distinguished" and monied of that College's alumni. While Eleazar Fitch could trace his descent back to the colony's founders, dissenting graduates were commonly men from obscure families that had never aspired to positions of influence. They were usually placed in the bottom half of their classes, a fact reflecting humble social rank rather than scholastic deficiencies.<sup>64</sup>

In many instances the straitened circumstances of Anglican pastors were shared by their parishioners. Indeed, on the eve of the Revolution, few Anglican parishes did not contain high percentages of taxpayers at low economic levels--which became a constant gloomy refrain in letters by ministers to their employers in London.<sup>65</sup>

Anglican indigence was especially evident in Simsbury, Norwich and New London, areas not remarkable for Tory zeal. On the other hand, the Reverend James Scovill reported widespread poverty among Anglicans in strongly Loyalist centers like Waterbury, Westbury and New Cambridge. The Stamford and Greenwich minister, the Reverend Bela Hubbard, observed a similar condition in the Guilford, North Guilford and Killingworth parishes. Norwalk, another vigorous Tory community, also had a penurious element alongside its prospering farmers; and Derby, a





bastion of Loyalism early in the Revolution as well, similarly featured a marked polarity among Anglican wage earners (40 per cent of the town population).<sup>66</sup>

Indeed, Anglican economic hardship cast a fitful light upon the relationship between Loyalism and an active pro-British role during the Revolution, revealing the willingness of those occupying the least prestigious places on the socioeconomic ladder and "rather low in their circumstances" to bear arms for or seek sanctuary with the British.<sup>67</sup>

The contrast with the colony's Tory officeholders, professional, propertied and College-trained class is startling. Holding less than 150 of total property and in some cases no land at all, hundreds of small tradesmen and farmers, craftsmen, seamen, laborers, apprentices, schoolteachers,<sup>68</sup> and young adventurers bore the main impact of anxiety, unemployment and economic dislocation created by hostilities upon

Connecticut's coastal and adjoining townships. With little stake in the colony's established order, the disadvantaged threw in their lot for varying periods with the British, often leaving behind only miscellaneous belongings: bundles of hay, wheat, rye, Indian corn, wearing apparel, tools, household furniture, cattle, sheep, horses, oxen, carts, pewter plates and tankards.<sup>69</sup>

That certain absconders were not ornaments of society was attested to by Whig petitioners, who gave a blistering description of those Greenwich and Stamford Loyalists--"Prophaine Idle Drinking Gamblers"--who, having served the crown, attempted to return to their homes after the British effort in the South had collapsed at Yorktown. "In general," Greenwich and Stamford informed the General Assembly, these quondam British allies were "far from Being of the Better Sort of

Families . . . ungoverned and vicious in their lives" and guilty of "Assassination Murder Robbery [sic] Theft Plunder Burning the Cuntry and Captivating her good Unarmed Citizens."<sup>70</sup> Though allowance should be made for the special type of guerrilla warfare that raged along the Sound--and for the animus of local Whigs against former townsmen--the link between the landless and underprivileged elements of Connecticut's mercantile communities and Loyalist activism is not without significance.

Anglican teachings among small farmers, petty traders, craftsmen and artisans in town parishes exposed to British influences by sea fortified a Loyalist pattern of behavior. Coastal inhabitants, trained from their youth "in the Business of Agriculture and the Coarser Arts of Life," professed to understand religion better than politics, believing that it was contrary to divine law to rebel against the King. Pardon Tabor communicated with a British vessel lying off New London, having been educated by one who had taught him "to think favorable [sic] of the measures of the King of Great Britain." A Norwalk-born innkeeper's son, Samuel Ketchum, also had been taught "Principles of Loyalty from which he never deviated."

Whether it was a Norwalk shoemaker or a mulatto cooper owning only a twenty-five-acre patch of land in Norwich, instinct and training shaped a political ideology and energized resistance to Whiggism. The silversmith Munson Jarvis and the weaver David Pickett, arraigned by a Stamford committee of inspection for Toryism, affirmed "a religious tie of conscience" in their defense, even though it was an unsuccessful plea and did not prevent their being declared enemies of their country. Similarly, a Greenwich artisan William Peck invoked the authority of the Anglican church when he based his opposition to the rebellion upon



the principle that compliance with the laws of George III and Parliament "was a Duty enjoined by the Christian Religion."<sup>71</sup>

While struggling small farmers were the principal element in rural Tory Anglican communities (like the New Cambridge parish), the predominance of "Shopkeepers, Seafaring Men, Mechanics and Tradesmen" observed by the Reverend John Tyler in an account of his needy parishioners<sup>72</sup> was a common feature of urban social structures incorporating Anglican groups. The artisans, generally less obfuscated by the issues of the conflict than the conservative small farmers, showed a belligerence on behalf of the crown (although Tyler's Norwich parish was by no means the most noteworthy example) that made their role in the revolutionary interplay between Whig and Tory social forces one of unusual importance.

Connecticut's artisan class, for one thing, like the Anglican clergy, was largely composed of natives of the province, and not of recent immigrants, who contributed a far greater proportion of their numbers to the King's service than native-born Americans outside New England.<sup>73</sup>

Their Anglicanism, despite its weakening influence as the Revolution progressed, prompted overt and aggressive Tory behavior along the seaboard and in the river towns, but other factors were also involved. The artisans, craftsmen and small traders were a mobile group in both a physical and a social sense; less tied to the land than the farmers and peculiarly sensitive to deranged town conditions and the vicissitudes of the labor market, they reacted quickly and spontaneously to dangers to whatever security they might have possessed -- dangers stemming from the threat of British invasion and from internal local disorder or persecution. The spectre of unemployment

and penury haunted artisans as a group more than farmers. A Hartford professional seaman, Pelatiah Turner, unable to find regular work to support his family, was not the only Loyalist to seek a living wage with the British at New York.<sup>74</sup>

Loyalist activism was also strong among a segment of Connecticut's more prosperous farming middle class. Men like John Still Winthrop, Gershom Lockwood, the Sellecks of Greenwich and Stamford, the Lyons of Redding, Josiah Stebbins of Ridgefield and Sylvanus Bishop of Litchfield with substantial property to defend and their Anglican faith to uphold made varying contributions to the British cause. A handful of professional men, merchants, businessmen and small farmers also risked fortunes and careers by joining or aiding the British. The higher one ascended the socioeconomic scale, though, the thinner and more scattered were those groups that gave material assistance to or bore arms for the crown. At the topmost echelons of government there were no overt opponents of Whiggism, no crown placemen, no entrenched ruling families with a vested interest in the recovery of royal authority or egregious monopolizers of public offices like the Tory Hutchinsons and Olivers of Massachusetts. The crown was scantily represented only in the customs service of the port towns; and by 1777 all royal officers, rapidly shorn of their powers, had disappeared from Connecticut.

In the most developed Tory opposition along the Sound and in the river communities,<sup>75</sup> however, the artisans and farmers, small and large, emerge as Britain's most active supporters. Indeed, the artisans (a term covering a wide variety of trades, crafts and business operations) surpassed all other social groups including the farmers in





terms of numbers and sustained dedication of Loyalist purpose.

Although many artisans were of the humblest means, they made up, as a body, the largest definable category in an occupational analysis of the three hundred heads of Connecticut families who fled to the British in nearby New York and subsequently emigrated to Canada. In that analysis, they more than doubled the farmers' numerical strength, with the two groups combined representing 77.5 per cent of the whole--an additional proof that active Loyalism, in a colony where reserves of wealth strengthened its Whiggish identity, was primarily an affair of the lower-middle class and the poor as well as of urbanites.<sup>76</sup>

### Notes

1. Daniel Leonard, Massachusetts (Boston, 1775), 102-103.
2. For an account of this depression, which affected farmers as well as merchants, see Oscar Zeichner, Connecticut's Years of Controversy (New Haven, 1950), 46-48. For the colony's population figures (the census returns for 1774), see Charles J. Hoadley, ed., Connecticut Colonial Records (Hartford, 1877), X, 618; XIV (Hartford, 1887), appendix, 499.
3. See Lawrence H. Gipson, "Connecticut Taxation and Parliamentary Aid Preceding the Revolutionary War," American Historical Review, XXXVI (1930-31), 721-739.
4. Ibid., 733-739; John C. Miller, Origins of the American Revolution (Boston, 1943), 93.
5. See Richard L. Bushman, From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765 (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), especially chapters XIV, XV, XVI.
6. Samuel A. Peters, A General History of Connecticut (London, 1829), 344n; Chilton Williamson, American Suffrage from Property to Democracy (Princeton, 1960), 39.
7. Peters ascribed the spirit of colonial disaffection to "the want of policy and justice in their party-colored charters and of the honors & privileges of natural born subjects of Great Britain." The colonists were not given "the honor of nobility," although the mother country otherwise made generous concessions "to Colonial desire for freedom & equality." Leaders of colonial society, he wrote, "craved for suitable recognition from the Crown." The craving was Peters' own, but he insisted that, since colonial leaders could not "secure an aristocratic patent" giving them a status equal to that of their British counterparts, "they turned instead for support to the MOBILITY--the teaming unlearned mass that form the majority of the population, aped the manners of REPUBLICANS & wore the colors of revolutionaries." Peters, A General History of Connecticut, 271-272.
8. Jackson T. Main, The Social Structure of Revolutionary America (Princeton, 1965), 27; Clinton Rossiter, The First American Revolution (New York, 1953), 40, 49-50.



Page 229 - YALE ... *Yale is in New Haven*

The annual appropriation was continued for 50 years. The first private donor, other than the organizers, was James Fitch of Norwich who gave 637 acres of land in Killingley, and glass and enough nails for a college hall. (This would have been Major James Fitch, not Rev. James.)

Page 247 ...

From this state have gone three presidents of Williams College, Ebenezer Fitch, from 1793, when the college was chartered. Fitch was born in Norwich, and was president 15 years.

Page 279 - THE REVOLUTION ...

When the news of the proposed Stamp Act arrived in 1763, the General Assembly appointed, in a secret and careful manner, three of it's ablest disputants to argue in it's favor, and three equally able to argue against it, that it might hold well-balanced convictions. One of the earliest resolves of the session was the appointment of a strong committee to assist Governor Fitch to set in order the objections to the Act. Jared Ingersoll, one of this committee, was commissioned to confer with Richard Jackson, agent of the colony in England, on the subject; it is reported that George Grenville praised the tone in which the Connecticut "Reasons" were written and admitted that the arguments were the best that he had seen, though fallacious. The measure passed the House of Commons, March 22, 1765, and soon afterwards Gov. Fitch called his council together to take an oath to cause "All and every one of the clauses (of the Act) to be punctually and bona fide observed." according to the requirements of the Stamp Act. There was a heated debate, and when the time-limit for the oath came, and it was proposed to administer it, Jonathan Trumbull, Eliphalet Dyer, Hezekiah Huntington, Elisha Sheldon, Matthew Griswold, Shubal Conant, and Jabez Huntington indignantly withdrew, refusing to witness a ceremony, which, as Dyer insisted, was "contrary to the oath the governor and council had before taken to maintain the rights and liberties of the people." The political future of Gov. Fitch was sealed, and after three years of Gov. William Pitkin, Jonathan Trumbull, the famous war Governor, held office until 1784. The temper of Governor Trumbull is seen in the following sentences from a broadside he issued as the mouthpiece of the Assembly, June 18, 1776, to be published in the churches, appealing to the "virtue and public spirit of the good people of the colony." "Affairs are hastening fast to a crisis, and the approaching campaign will be in all probability determine forever the fate of America. Be exhorted to rise therefore to superior exertions on this great occasion; and let all that are able and necessary shew themselves ready in behalf of their injured and oppressed country, and come forth to help the Lord against the mighty, and convince the unrelenting tyrant of Great Britain that they are resolved to be FREE.





The invasions of Tryon, whose fleet had lingered threateningly along the coast, brought much suffering to Connecticut in 1779. On July 3, as the people of New Haven were preparing to celebrate the Declaration of Independence, the town was thrown into alarm by the news that Tryon's fleet of 48 sail had dropped anchor at West Haven, and 3,000 men were on the march for the city. They advanced in two detachments, one marching from West Haven, and the other capturing a small fort at Black Rock, then meeting the first contingent on the common at one o'clock. The town was plundered until the next morning, the acts of cruelty and destruction of property are described in the traditions. On July 8, Tryon destroyed Fairfield, also Green's farms. Norwalk was next to go up in flames; and at the next landing, so many resolute men met him that he retired. His loss of 300 men in the plundering expeditions was a severe punishment and the injury inflicted on Connecticut was less.

We find a place in this chapter to speak of the Loyalists or Tories, (Grumbletonians) as they were sometimes called in those strenuous times. It is not strange there should have been conservative men, who naturally shrank from the confusion and threatening anarchy attending the insurgents in the experiment of self-government, and laid excessive stress upon the fact that America belonged to England. It would perhaps be too strong a statement to say with the bitter critic, Samuel Peters, that the "multitude considered the General Assembly to be the equal of the British Parliament., but the experience of nearly a century and a half of self-government as an independent republic had fostered a condition which President Dwight in his TRAVELS describes thus: "In no state of the world was an individual of more importance as a man than in Connecticut. Such a degree of freedom was never before united with such a degree of stability."

In the upheaval which tried men's souls to the utmost, it would be remarkable if good judgment and self-control should prevail in every case, for the 72 townships were little republics with 3000 town officials, who had taken oath to do their duty conformably with the constitution and laws. A sharp watch was kept over every one. As early as 1702, an act was passed which ordered town clerks to keep a list of all the freemen in the town, at every meeting to call the roll, and absentees were to pay a fine of two shillings. In this situation and with such training, it is not strange that in moments of excitement, some people went to extremes, as in Windham, when two men, known as Peter's Spies, who had been arrested for carrying treacherous correspondence, were forced to run the gauntlet between two rows of women and children armed with switches and broomsticks. In Simsbury, a Tory was shot for being beyond his premises after being warned, and in Hartford another was shot after a similar warning. It is not known what proportion of the people in the colonies were Tories. John Adams put the proportion at about one-third, and another estimate is that of the 25,000 males

The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's development. The author has done a great deal of research and has gathered a wealth of material. The report is well written and is easy to read. It is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's development.

The second part of the report deals with the economic situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's economic development. The author has done a great deal of research and has gathered a wealth of material. The report is well written and is easy to read. It is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's economic development.

The third part of the report deals with the social situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's social development. The author has done a great deal of research and has gathered a wealth of material. The report is well written and is easy to read. It is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's social development.

between 16 and 50 in Connecticut in 1774, about 2000 were in the class of Loyalists. Connecticut had a larger share than the other New England colonies, and they were mostly in Fairfield County. Considering that the twenty Episcopal ministers in the colony received an annual stipend from the English Missionary Society, it is not strange that some of them should have thought that the policy of the colonies was unwise to their churches. Some of them called it unnatural rebellion, and when the patriotic spirit ran high in 1774, the Sons of Liberty organized, Tories were treated as social outlaws, and some towns passed resolutions of grief and detestation. It soon appeared that more radical measures must be taken, and in all parts of the state, committees of inspection were appointed, consisting of from 15 to 30 men in each town. Vigilance Committees, to search into the actions and disposition of everyone in the community. On finding a Loyalist, they forbade him to leave his farm, and published in one or more of the four newspapers of the colony his name on the first page under the heading: PERSONS HELD UP TO VIEW AS ENEMIES OF THEIR COUNTRY.

In 1775, Congress advised the arrest of every one who might endanger the safety of the colony, or the liberty of America. Washington felt strongly on the subject, and said to Gov. Trumbull "Seize the Tories that are active; they are preying on the vitals of the country, and will do all the mischief in their power." In December, 1775, the General Assembly passed an act which ordered that all who actively aided the enemy with supplies or information should forfeit their estate and be imprisoned for a term, not to exceed three years. That those who defamed Congress or the Assembly should be disfranchised, keep no arms, and if thought wise, be imprisoned or fined, and that those reported to be "inimical" were to be disarmed.

Early in 1776, Congress surged the "most speedy and effectual measures to frustrate the mischievous machinations, and restrain the wicked practices of these men," and the governor and council took action accordingly. A few months after the Declaration of Independence, the General Assembly ordered that any Loyalist who should aid the enemy should be sentenced to death for treason, and that anyone who should have knowledge of such action and should conceal the fact, should be fined, and imprisoned not more than three years. Informers multiplied, especially in the shore-towns and the Assembly ordered that no one leave the state in a boat with a written permit signed by some authority of town or army. At the same session, an act passed the Assembly enjoining an "Oath of Fidelity", and whoever neglected to take this oath could not hold any office or transfer real estate. Tory prisoners were in nearly every jail, and at Newgate Prison, among thirty or forty Loyalist prisoners were Gov. Franklin of New Jersey, Mayor Matthews of New York, and Dr. Benjamin Church of Watertown, Mass., for the story of Connecticut vigilance went abroad.







In the summer of 1777, Tories began to repent in large numbers, as a result of an act of the Assembly, proclaiming pardon to all who were convinced of their error and were ready to return to duty, and before the close of the war hundreds took the freeman's oath, and received their estates back again. In 1779 the Assembly passed another liberal act, inviting "absconding Tories" to return. The action of Connecticut, while firm and positive toward men were not in sympathy with the insurgents, was not revengeful, and both Assembly and towns were read to pardon the penitent. The part taken by the state from the wise, prompt, and large-minded governor to the privage in the ranks and the faithful women on the farms was patriotic and effective.









## LIST OF POSSIBLE TORIES 1781

We the Subscribers Agreeable to an Act and Appointment of the Honourable General Assembly having been called upon and Requested by the Civil Authority in Selectmen of the Town of Norwalk to Enquire into the Character and Conduct of a Number of persons whose names are contained in a List or roll by them presented to us as Inimical and Dangerous to the Liberties and Independence of the thirteen States of America: And we having Duly Examined into the premises are of the opinion that the following persons whose names are hereafter Enpressed (?) are Inimical and Dangerous as aforesaid and therefore give Judgment and Order that their names be Enrolled in the Town Clerk's Office in ye Town of Norwalk as Dangerous and Inimical as aforesaid for the purposes Mentioned in an Act of the General Assembly of this State Entitled an Act more Effectually to prevent Robberies and plunder from our Open and Secret Enemies

Viz, Obediah Wright, Nathan Burwell, Jr., Thomas Hanford, Nathan Jarvis, Thomas Fairweather, David Bolt, Peter White, Hezekiah Whitney, Jr (?), Nathan Gregory, Phillip Scribner, Hezekiah Belden, John Belden, Edward Nash, Gershom Raymond, James Fillio, William Bolt, Ebenezer Church, David Lambert, Goold Hayt, Abraham Whitney, John Sanders, Jun., Garner Olmstead, Richard Patrick, Nathan Fitch and John Fitch, all of Norwalk aforesaid, each of the above named persons having first been Duly Notified and Cited to Appear before us at time and place by us Appointed for that purpose to shew reason , if any, they had why their names should not be Enrolled as aforesaid. Done at Norwalk this 20<sup>th</sup> Day of April A.D. 1781

By us.....Daniel Sherman  
Benjamin Henman (?)  
Andrew Adam  
Increase Moseley.....Committee

To the Town Clerk of Norwalk

Rec. to Record  
April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1781 and  
Recorded by me Samuel Gruman, Reg.

*Book 14, Page 409*

*Described in index as "John Fitch to Norwalk"*



NAMES OF THOSE LISTED AS POSSIBLE TORIES FOR A WORKSHEET

Obediah Wright

Nathan Burwell, Jr.

Thomas Hanford

Nathan Jarvis

Thomas Fairweather

David Bolt

Peter White

Hezekiah Whitney, Jr. (?)

Nathan Gregory

Phillip Scribner

Hezekiah Belden

John Belden

Edward Nash

Gershom Raymond

James Fillio

William Bolt

Ebenezer Church

David Lambert

Goold Hoyt

Abraham Whitney

John Sanders, Jr.

Garner Olmstead

Richard Patrick

Nathan Fitch

John Fitch









## TORY TIME LINE AND FACTS

John Fitch was in a jail in Norwich.....find

John Fitch listed in 1781 Tory list of Norwalk

Friends and acquaintances and relatives also on the Tory list

Nathan Fitch

William Fitch of Stamford

Nathan Burwell.....witness to Eliz. Ellis will in 1777

James Fillio.....bought some of John's land in 1786 — *next door neighbor*

Ebenezer Church family.....married Susanna Fitch, dau. of Samuel

Garner Olmstead.....witness to Eliz. Ellis will in 1777

Joseph Olmstead.....witness to Eliz. Ellis will in 1777 and prob. brothers

Gideon Lockwood.....brother to Elizabeth Lockwood, John's wife

Albert Lockwood.....brother to Elizabeth Lockwood, John's wife

Jabez Sherwood, Jr.....possible relation to David Morehouse family

Fairfield was a Tory center.

"that the towns of Ridgefield and Newtown had come into and published certain resolutions injurious to the rights of this colony and of a dangerous tendency."

Middletown was a Tory center.

In some of these towns resolutions against the Tories were voted down.

It was thought that all Episcopalians were open or secret Tories. They had separate schools and the members of the church were confined to their farms at Waterbury.

Soldiers were sent to the churches to prevent the preachers from praying for the King. Some preachers prayed anyway in defiance. Some were tarred and feathered. Some were threatened with death but prayed for the King anyway. They were let go.

A Bristol Tory by the name of Potter was hung until nearly dead.

A Joel Tuttle was hung to an oak tree on Federal Hill in Bristol and left alone to die. He was cut down by a local man, who did not dare to give him other help and he partially recovered during the night and made his way to safety to Tory Den.

One of the greatest obstacles for the Patriot was the Tory.

Col. John Butler of New York was in command of the 400 Tories and Indians at the massacre of Wyoming, which was then part of CT. That was July 10, 1778.

Tory guides led Tryon at the burning of Danbury. Made his headquarters at the house of Joseph Dibble. They marked the Tory homes with a white cross so they would not be burned when Tryon went through. The Cong. Church and all other homes were destroyed except for those bearing the white cross. Apparently there were more Tories than Patriots there at the time as the Tories stayed in town, and the others had to leave.

Jarvis was one of these Tory guides. He went to Nova Scotia, later returned to Danbury, was then about to be tarred and feathered and his sister hid him in an ash oven until he could make his escape and never return again.

Eli Benedict was another of the Tory guides. Had to leave town after being threatened.





Isaac W. Shelton was another and he joined the British on Long Island. After the war he was allowed to live in Bristol and gained quite a bit of property.

Tories continually carried on illicit trade between CT and Long Island. They carried off Tory recruits for the British and Tory families with large quantities of provisions that were sadly needed here, and much of this work was done under a British flag of truce.

Families were divided.

Moses Dunbar was hung for high treason and his father was a firm Patriot. They were bitterly opposed to each other.

After the war, many of the Tories returned, entered into public life, voted and held office. In 1784 New Haven voted to readmit the Tories to the town. So the Patriots and the Tories did dwell together in peace and harmony, in contrast to the Revolutionary times.

Apparently the General Assembly, Governor and Council of Safety were ready to forgive and give leniency and mercy.

1774

Stephen Sears of Sharon and Lt. Ebenezer Orvis of Farmington were published as public enemies. Lt. Orvis, Mrs. Lydia Orvis and Hannah Andruss had been using the detested tea!!

Dec, 1774

Nehemiah Royce and Matthias Leaming voted against the doings of the Cont. Congress. In 75 Leming was advertised as an open enemy. Royce, who had been prevented from sending his children to school, was not as the evidence was not sufficient, but in May of 1777 he was again on the list. Mathias' s brother Jeremiah was the Norwalk preacher who went off with the British. Mathias is buried at a cemetery in Farmington which says he is "now beyond persecution, the Life of Man is Vanity".

1775, May

CT passed an act to gather troops

1775, July

A brig owned by Josiah Winslow, royalist of Boston, was forced into Stonington Harbor with 10,000 gallons of molasses on board. The people of Norwich captured it for the state. Referred to as "tory molasses" it proved a comfort for the Continental Army.

1775, December

CT passed an "act for restraining and punishing persons who are inimical to the Liberties of this and the rest of the United Colonies". Also the confiscation of property.

1776, May

"if these infernal <sup>enemies</sup> are suffered to proceed in their hellish schemes, our ruin is certain, but if they are destroyed the power of Hell and Britain will never prevail against us.

1776, June

Act to include all real and personal estates of convicted Tories

1776, July

Act to stop travel of those who might be inimical

1776, October

Death with conviction of high treason

1776, October

Selectmen may confine or remove any persons they judge to be inimical and he must

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

2. The second part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

3. The third part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

4. The fourth part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

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16. The sixteenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

17. The seventeenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

18. The eighteenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

pay the costs involved.

1777, January

Some of the convicted Tories were permitted to return home upon giving bond of 1,000 *pounds* each for their good behaviour and promise not to do anything against the US again.

Nathan Fitch, Frank Smith, Gold Hoyt, Stephen Keller, and John Betts of Norwalk were in this group. We still find Nathan Fitch on another Tory list in 1780/81.

1777, February 24

Day appointed for Tories to bring their cases before the General Assembly. Several were released and permitted to go home including Garner Olmstead and William Fitch. Garner finds himself again on the 1780/81 Tory suspect list.

1777, May

May be taken for service to pay off their indebtedness to the country.

1777, August

None taken could get out on bail, but must stay imprisoned until delivered by due course of law.

1777, October

No person could be an administrator on any estate til he has taken an oath of fidelity and if no oath will be taken there can be no transfer of any property, not to buy or sell.

Properties were confiscated.

Some wives stood against their husbands, so they could keep part of the property for their family use and the requests were granted.

Some left for Canada and made requests for their families to follow and that was granted.

1778, May

Law was changed so that constables did not have to take away personal property from the families, and estates were brought to court so there could be arrangements made to take care of the wife and children, and the payment of debts.

Some absconded to Lord Howe and their families were also removed to Lord Howe and their estates were secured by the townsmen.

When 2 women had been jailed they let them go home on the request that their families were suffering because they were not there to take care of them.

Many Loyalists switched sides in the fight and became good Patriots in the latter years of the war. Some did not. Some took off to Canada and lived out their lives there. Apparently John Fitch may have relented as he still had his personal property in 1786 and was able to sell it and move to PA to start again on 242 acres. We do not know for sure he was the Tory John Fitch but a lot of his friends and acquaintances as noted above were among that list so very possible.

Gideon Lockwood and brother, Albert, were brought before the General Assembly. No information on just how the cases went has been given, but were on a list of many who were brought before the General Assembly. We know that Gideon did sign up with his team of horses for 3 months during the war and served some time, but also note that another went in his place for a part of the time so Gideon may not have spent the whole 3 months. He was taking supplies to various places using his own team. His wife applied for his pension.

Also note that Ephriam Lockwood, another brother, went over to the British and left his wife, and children to do so. He may have returned, later, but we find that he was dead by the time his father died in 1783 and his family was named as "Children of Ephraim, deceased" in the will.





These 3 Lockwoods were brothers and were also the brother of Elizabeth Lockwood, who was supposed to have married John Fitch. So there is a very close connection between them all. Elizabeth was also dead by the time of her father's will so do not know what happened to her.

Also had an older brother who was also a Lawyer  
& went to New Brunswick (Jabez Lockwood)  
May have been Lin's ancestor

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

PHILOSOPHY 101

LECTURE 1

THE PHILOSOPHY OF

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PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

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LECTURE 1

THE PHILOSOPHY OF

# THE TORIES OF CONNECTICUT

Published in the

Connecticut Quarterly

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BY JAMES SHEPARD

During the first few years of the revolutionary war, this state was literally full of Tories. They filled our jails to overflowing; many of them were confined within the court-house at Hartford, and others were confined under guard or within certain limits on parole in various parts of the state where they would be out of contrast with the British, while many others of fighting age and burning zeal for their King left their families, property and homes and took up arms against the American cause.

In addition to our own Tories those of other states were sent here for confinement. The Tories were so numerous that it would be impossible to notice them all in one paper and besides it would be an almost endless task to find in the voluminous manuscript records of the state, the various superior courts and towns, the names of those who were brought to answer. And even if one should do all this, there were many more bearing coldness or hatred to the American cause who by a judicious self-control kept their hands and tongues from committing any overt act and thus left no history.

A Tory was an American who adhered to the King, and by sympathy or otherwise favored the part of Great Britain in the revolutionary war. They were sometimes called Loyalists, but the terms Loyalist and Tory mean precisely the same thing, excepting as the word Tory may carry with it an element of contempt. Those who strenuously insist on saying Loyalist instead of Tory would be very likely to apply the name Rebel to our revolutionary Patriots. The Tories were certainly loyal to their King, they upheld the existing state of affairs—in fact one of the principles of Tories in any country has always been “the maintenance of things as they were.”

In May, 1775, the Colony of Connecticut passed an “act regulating and ordering the Troops that are or may be raised for the Defence of this colony,” which act was called the articles of war. In December, 1775, an “act for restraining and punishing persons who are inimical to the Liberties of this and the rest of the United Colonies” was passed, which provided among other things “that if any person by writing, or speaking, or by any overt act, shall libel or defame any of the resolves of the Honorable Congress of the United Colonies, or the acts of the General Assembly of this Colony, and be thereof duly convicted before the Superior Court, shall be disarmed and not allowed to have or keep any arms, and rendered incapable to hold or serve in any office civil or military, and shall be further punished by fine, imprisonment or disfranchisement.” The same act provided also for the confiscation of real estate. At a special session in June, 1776, this act was amended to cover the confiscation of both real and personal estate of all convicted Tories. The year of the King's reign headed the record of this act of '75 opposing the King, but that was the last time that such dating appears in the journal.

# THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

OF THE

AMERICAN PEOPLE

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENTS

TO THE PRESENT TIME

The first part of the history of the United States is the story of the early settlers. These men and women came from Europe and Africa to seek a better life in the New World. They found a land of great beauty and abundance, but they also found a land of great danger. The Indians, who had lived in the land for centuries, were hostile to the newcomers. The settlers fought many battles with the Indians, and many lives were lost. But the settlers were determined to stay. They built forts and settlements, and they began to cultivate the land. They grew crops and raised animals, and they began to build a new life for themselves in the New World.

The second part of the history of the United States is the story of the growth of the colonies. The colonies grew from small settlements into large, powerful states. They developed their own laws and customs, and they began to assert their independence from England. The British government, however, wanted to keep the colonies under control. It imposed taxes and laws on the colonies, and the colonies resisted. This led to a series of conflicts between the colonies and the British government, which culminated in the American Revolution.

The third part of the history of the United States is the story of the American Revolution. The colonies fought a war with the British government, and they won. They declared their independence, and they established a new government. The new government was based on the principles of liberty and justice for all. It was a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. The American Revolution was a great event in the history of the world. It was the first time that a colony had successfully fought for its independence from a powerful empire.

The fourth part of the history of the United States is the story of the early years of the new nation. The new government faced many challenges. It had to build a strong central government, and it had to deal with the problems of the states. It had to establish a system of laws and courts, and it had to create a system of education. The new government was a great success. It was a government that was based on the principles of liberty and justice for all. It was a government that was of the people, by the people, and for the people.

The fifth part of the history of the United States is the story of the growth of the new nation. The new nation grew from a small country into a great power. It developed its own economy and culture, and it began to assert its influence on the world. The new nation was a great success. It was a nation that was based on the principles of liberty and justice for all. It was a nation that was of the people, by the people, and for the people.

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES



The Governor and Council of Safety on July 18, 1776, voted that, "Where as many persons inimical to the United States do wander from place to place with intent to spy out the state of the colonies," etc., and 'no person be allowed to pass unless known to be friendly, or unless by proper certificate or otherwise they can prove themselves to be friendly to America." A more stringent act of the same nature was passed in May, 1777.

In October, 1776, an act for the punishment of high treason and other atrocious crimes against the state was passed which provided "That if any person or persons belonging to or residing within this state and under the protection of its laws, shall levy war against the state or government thereof, or knowingly and willingly shall aid or assist any enemies at open war against this state or the United States of America by joining their armies or by enlisting or procuring or persuading others to enlist for that purpose \* \* or shall form or be in any way concerned in forming any combination, plot, or conspiracy for betraying this state or the United States into the hands or power of any foreign enemy, or shall give or attempt to give or send any intelligence to the enemies of this state for that purpose, upon being convicted shall suffer death." At least six persons were convicted of high treason under this act, but Moses Dunbar of Waterbury is the only person who was ever executed in Connecticut under the civil law.

It was further provided in May, 1777, "that all Tories confined within this state may at all times be taken for debt, provided they are returned after having worked out their indebtedness." In October, 1777, it was enacted "that no person can be administrator on any estate till he has taken the oath of fidelity, and that anyone who refuses to take the oath of fidelity shall not be capable to purchase or hold or transfer any real estate without license from the General Assembly."

It was not necessary that a man should be convicted of toryism by a justice of the peace or a judge before he could be confined or removed and compelled to pay the cost of removal. In October, 1776, the General Assembly voted "That the civil authority, selectmen and committee of inspection within the several towns of this state shall have power to confine within certain limits or remove all such persons as they shall upon due examination judge to be inimical and dangerous to the United States, at the cost of such persons, and that His Honor the Governor and Council of Safety shall determine the place or places of confinement."

In August, 1777, it was enacted "that any person convicted under the act relating to treason shall not be allowed liberty on bail, but shall be imprisoned until delivered by due course of law."

The first record I find of any Tory in the doings of the General Assembly is that of Abraham Blakesly of New Haven, captain of a military company in the second regiment of this colony, who was complained of before the General Assembly in March, 1775, "for being disaffected to this government by speaking contemptuously of the measures taken by the General Assembly for maintaining the same." His case was referred to the next session, and in the following May he was cashiered. In October, 1775, it was represented that Benjamin Stiles of Woodbury "hath publicly and contemptuously uttered and spoken many things against the qualification of the three delegates of the colony now belonging to the Continental Congress, &c., &c., whereof he hath openly showed his inimical temper of mind and unfriendly disposition." He was cited to appear before the General Assembly at their next sessions.

It was also reported that a major part of one company in Northbury (now Plymouth) was inclined to toryism, and a committee was appointed to inquire and report.





In November, 1775, "The Brigatine Minerva, an armed vessel in the service of the colony, was ordered on a cruise to the northward on an important enterprise for the defense and safety of the colony, when all hands on board except ten or twelve utterly declined and refused to go, so that the expedition wholly failed." All these disobedient hands were discharged and their title to receive their wages was suspended.

In December, 1775, Lieut. Benjamin Kilborn of Litchfield was complained of as declaring "that he wished there were ten thousand regular troops now landed in the colony and that he would immediately join with them in order to subdue the Americans who were in a state of rebellion, that he was determined to join the Regulars and would kill some of the inhabitants of said colony! that the late oppressive measures of the British respecting America were constitutional and right and that the conduct of the United Colonies were unconstitutional and rebellious," etc. He was cashiered and directed to be prosecuted in law for what he would call his firm adherence to the King, and yet the complaint against him was brought by the "Attorney of our Lord the King." The forms of various processes, oaths, etc., were soon afterwards changed to avoid all reference to the King.

In June, 1776, Capt. Daniel Hill, Lieut. Peter Lyon and Ensign Samuel Hawley, all of the 11th Company, in the Fourth Regiment, and Hezekiah Brown of the 12th Company, in the Tenth Regiment, were ordered to appear before the General Assembly for disobedience, etc. John R. Marshall of Woodbury, missionary, was cited to appear before the General Assembly for toryism. Capt. Isaac Quintard and Filer Dibble, both of Stamford, were suspected of assisting a British officer to the possession of certain barrels of powder stored at said Quintard's house, but Quintard claimed to be innocent and Dibble published a confession and recantation of toryism. He afterwards joined the British army. Capt. Nathaniel Shayler of Middletown refused to muster his company and march to assist George Washington at New York. He was cashiered and declared unfit to hold office. Thomas Brooks of Farmington, a lieutenant, openly professed that he could not join the army against Great Britain or against the King, and was therefore suspended. Jacob Perkins, captain of the First Company, in the Twentieth Regiment, and Samuel Wheat, captain of the Second Company, in said regiment, refused to muster and march for the defence of this state and were ordered to be brought before the General Assembly, but in December, 1776, upon satisfactory information that they had acknowledged their fault, "have since complied and declared themselves sorry and are now ready to defend their country with their lives and fortune, this assembly ready to forgive have and do revoke the aforesaid order." In January, 1778, Capt. James Landon of Salisbury, for neglect of duty and great unfriendliness to the American cause, cited to appear before the Assembly and later was cashiered. Capt. Solomon Marsh was also cashiered for the same cause, while John Marsh the 3rd declared his willingness to risk his life for America and the complaint against him was dismissed. "Epaphras Sheldon, Esqr., Colonel of the Seventeenth Regiment of militia, was dismissed for disobedience and Lieut. Ira Beebe of Waterbury was dismissed for leading off a number of his company from Fishkill last October."

In February, 1778, it was represented to the General Assembly "that Robert Martin hath been chosen Captain of the 15th Co. 10th regiment, and Reuben Rice, junr. Lieut. and that they are unfriendly to the liberties of America and its independence." A committee was appointed to examine them, but they subsequently received their commissions.

In May, 1778, "three alarm list Companies of Newtown made choice of persons for their officers that were inimical to this and other of the United States, and for that reason their commissions were refused and a new election ordered."





Fairfield county was a Tory center. The first Episcopal church in Connecticut was founded at Stratford in November, 1722. The Rev. John Beach, rector of the churches at Reading and Newtown, said in 1767: "It is some satisfaction to me to observe that in this town (Newtown) of late in our elections the church people make the major vote, which is the first instance of this kind in this colony, if not in all New England." This was the only town in the state in which Episcopalians were in the majority during the war. In 1775, it was represented to the General Assembly "that the towns of Ridgefield and Newtown had come into and published certain resolutions injurious to the rights of this colony and of a dangerous tendency." A committee was appointed to examine said matter and report. In October, 1777, it was represented to the General Assembly "that a number of inimical persons in the western towns in the state are forming dangerous insurrections and taking every method in their power to communicate intelligence to comfort, aid, and assist the enemies of these United States and to distress the inhabitants of said towns," etc. Whereupon a committee was sent to these towns to "examine all such persons with full power to confine them as deemed best." The town officers may have been Tories, or the towns may have instructed them not to take any action. Such votes were passed in several towns. Even in Middletown several resolutions to have the town authorities take action against the Tories were voted down. That place was probably a Tory center, for in July, the Council of Safety voted "that none of the prisoners residing at Hartford or Wethersfield be any longer permitted to go into the town of Middletown without a special license."

In October, 1776, Ralph Tsacss and Abiatha Camp, both of New Haven, were before the Assembly and adjudged to be "so dangerous to the state that they ought to be removed." They were sent to Eastbury, in the town of Glastonbury, to be retained there in care of the civil authority of the town, and it was further resolved, "That if said Isaacs and Camp shall receive any letter or letters from any person or persons, or send any, they shall offer such letters to some one of said civil authority or selectmen to be by them read and inspected." It was also provided that in case they should leave Eastbury, any officer can take them and put them in jail. In December following, Isaacs asked permission to reside in Durham under the same conditions. His petition was granted, but still discontented, in February, he complains of his quarters, and at his own request he is ordered to Wallingford. In response to another petition the following June, the still discontented Isaacs is removed to his farm in Branford. In October of the same year he is "granted liberty to attend any of the Superior Courts in this state in which he has any action depending for trial upon first taking the oath of fidelity. In January, 1778, he states that he is the executor of his father's and brother's wills, that these estates and his own affairs suffer greatly by reason of his confinement, that he has taken the oath of fidelity and done much to promote the good of the United States, whereupon he was "discharged and set at liberty."

His fellow prisoner remained for a while at Eastbury, and while there, Davis's History of Wallingford says that he applied to the General Assembly for "permission to be indulged the free exercise of his religion on Sundays at Middletown in attending religious worship by the Church of England, of which he was a professor and member," but the petition was denied. In December, 1777, he asked to be removed either to his farm in North Branford or to his house in Wallingford. He was sent to Wallingford to stay within the limits of the Parish. He does not, however, appear to have been well received for the town "Voted, that Abiatha Camp, formerly of New Haven, now being in the town of Wallingford, shall not dwell in said town nor be an inhabitant of said town. Voted that the Selectmen of said town Go and Warn Said Camp immediately to Depart said town." He was certainly in a straight betwixt two. He could stay only in defiance of the town, he could leave only in defiance of the state. The state came to the rescue and discharged him in January, 1778. He finally went to St. John, New Brunswick, and died there in 1841. The





selectmen of Stamford, when they warned Tories out of town, added the injunction that they were "never to return."

On January 22, 1777, **Ebenezer Hall** of Fairfield was by the authorities of that town brought before the Governor and Council as a person dangerous and inimical to this and the United States that his place of confinement might be determined. His Honor the Governor fully instructed him in the nature of the dispute between Great Britain and these states and of the measures taken to prevent any rupture or disaffection between this and the mother country long before the commencement of any hostilities. The said Hall then declared himself fully convinced of the justice of the American cause and of her rights to take up arms in defence, where-upon he was released and allowed to return to his family on giving bail, etc. A similar petition and action was had as to Capt. **Isaac Tomlinson** of Woodbury.

January 22, 1777, **Lazarus Beach**, **Andrew Fairfield**, **Nathan Lee**, **Abel Burr** of Reading and **Thomas Allen** of Newtown, being Tory convicts confined in the town of Mansfield to prevent any mischievous practice. having made their escape, and being taken up, were remanded back to the Governor and Council. They were all sent to jail in Windham "to be safely kept until they come out thence by due order of the General Assembly or Governor and Council." A Thomas Allen of New London was sent to Windham as a Tory in March, 1777.

On January 28, 1777, **Rev. John Sayer** of Fairfield was before the Governor and Council as a Tory that he might be ordered to some safe place for confinement. He was sent to the parish of New Britain to be under the care of Col. Isaac Lee, and not to depart the limits of said society until further orders. In July of the same year the wardens of the Episcopal church and others at Fairfield, with consent of the selectmen and committee of inspection, petitioned for his release and return to his people to remain within the limits of Fairfield and give bond with surety for good behavior, which petition was granted. He was probably the first Episcopal clergyman that ever resided in New Britain. In a letter he subsequently said: "I was banished to a place called New Britain, where I was entirely unknown except to one poor man, the inhabitants differing from me both in religion and political principles; however, the family in which I lived showed me such marks of kindness as they could, and I was treated with civility by the neighbors."

In January, 1777, **Ebenezer Holby**, **Elliot Green**, **Jonathan Husted**, **Josiah Seely**, **Benjamin James**, **Isaac Hubbard**, **Jacob Scofield** of Stamford, **Nathan Fitch**, **Frank Smith**, **Gold Hoyt**, **Stephen Keller** and **John Betts** of Norwalk, convict Tories, were permitted to return home upon giving bond of £ 1,000 each for their good behavior, and not to give any intelligence nor do or say anything against the interests of the U. S. A.

**John Sanford**, a person confined in Mansfield as an enemy to his country, was permitted to go to Reading to settle his mother's estate on giving bond for £r,000 to be forfeited if he did anything against the interest of this state or the other of the U. S. A.

In February, Capt. Hall of Wallingford took considerable time of the General Assembly on business about Tories, and the 24th of that month was a day appointed for Tories to bring their cases before the General Assembly. **Job Barniack**, **Enoch Warren**, **Jos. Olmstead** and **Richard Patrick** of Norwalk, residing in Coventry, **Frederick Dibble** and **Stephen Wilson** of Stamford, residing at Lebanon, were permitted to return home, having signed a full and ample declaration of the justice of the American cause with profession of their friendship to it. The next day three more Tories, viz., **Gardner Olmstead** of Norwalk, **Nathaniel Munday** and **Samuel Crissey** of Stamford came and signed the same declaration and were discharged. **William Fitch** of Stamford

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was also allowed to go home. John Wilcocks, Ira Ward and James Ward, all of Killingsworth, and confined in Willington, repented and were released. George Folliot of Ridgefield, having been confined first in Fairfield jail and then in Hartford jail, was released on paying cost, etc. One Hubbard and Jno. Wilson, of Stamford, visited houses and persons infected with small pox and then went about among people not so infected. They were consequently put in charge of the selectmen of Lebanon.

Hanford Fairweather of Norwalk, sentenced to Windham jail for two years, had the privilege to work out days, but had to return to jail at night, asked permission to stay outside of the jail and also to go to Norwalk and remove his family to Windham to reside there with him. His request was granted.

Of Tory property that was confiscated, we find but little in the published state reports. In December, 1776, the property of John McKey of Norwalk was confiscated, and he was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for harboring and secreting persons who were about to go over to the enemy. In May, 1777, he was released and his estate restored to him.

Sundry farms in Hebron, belonging to Barlow Trecothick and John Tomlinson of Great Britain and to the Rev. Samuel Peters, then in Great Britain, were confiscated in May, 1778, and the State Attorney for Hartford County was empowered to lease the said farms for the benefit of the state.

In May, Mary Hoyt, wife of Isaac Hoyt, late of Danbury, represented to the General Assembly that she had ever been a true friend to the rights of her country, but that her husband, being an enemy to his country, joined the British during their raid on Danbury and thereby justly forfeited all his estate, both real and personal, which had been seized and left her without the necessities of life. She requested that she might be allowed one-third part of said estate, which request was granted. Nicholas Brown of Hartford went over to the enemy in New York and left his wife Hannah and four children. She was given liberty to follow him with her children to New York at her own pleasure and expense. Hannah Church, the wife of Asa Church of Danbury, was also given permission to follow her absconding husband to New York.

In February, 1778, it was represented to the General Assembly that the property of Samuel Doolittle of Waterbury had been confiscated, leaving a wife Eunice and three children to be supported by her father, Thomas Cole, and that a certain round table and other articles of the confiscated property were her wedding portion. It was therefore, resolved "that the said round table and other articles, being 1 quart cup, 3 pewter platters, 6 plates, 1 pint cup, 3 pewter basins, 3 porringers, 1 teapot, 1 pepper box, 5 spoons, 3 knives and forks, 6 plain chairs, 1 great wheel, 1 Dutch wheel, 1 feather bed, 1 bed quilt, 2 blankets, 2 pair of sheets, 1 iron pot, 1 looking-glass, 1 beer barrel, 1 churn, 1 pair of fiatirons, 1 clock-reel, 1 bed tick, 1 meal sive, 1 frying pan, 1 chest with drawers, 6 black chairs, 1 warming pan, 1 brass kettle, a cow and a calf and ten sheep. which are now held in custody of Samuel Hickox, constable, be delivered to said Thomas Cole for the use and support of said Eunice and her children.

In August, 1779, the town authorities of Derby applied to the General Assembly in behalf of the family of Azariah Prichard, who had gone to Canada and joined the enemy, and permission was granted his wife and children with wearing apparel and a bed and furniture to be removed to Canada.

In May, 1778, the confiscation act was so amended that the constable was not compelled to take household goods away from the families, and all confiscated estates were thereafter





brought before the probate courts, who were instructed to grant administration as in other estates, whereby a proper allowance for the wife and children could be made and also provision for the payments of debts.

In January, 1780, the administrators of the confiscated estate of **Joseph Hanford** of Fairfield, and of **William Nichols** of Waterbury, asked the General Assembly for certain instructions. In 1777 the town of Wallingford voted "That the families of all those who are convicted of Toryism and the heads of all the families that have absconded to Lord How, they and their families shall be removed to Lord How. Also voted that the selectmen of said town secure the estates of all those persons that are inimical to the States of America."

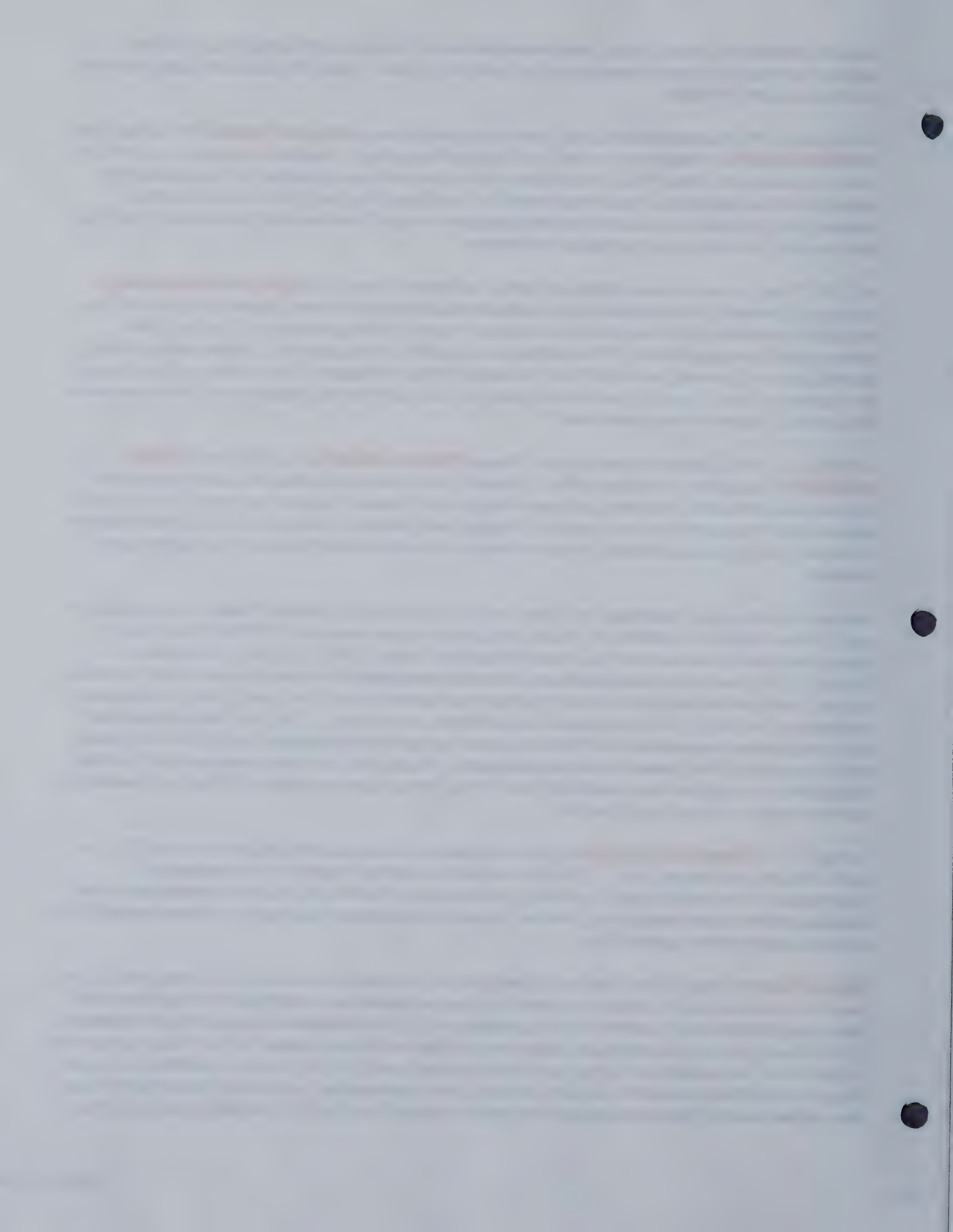
In 1780, Pomp, a negro slave belonging to the confiscated estate of **Rev. Jeremiah Learning**, formerly of Norwalk, represented to the General Assembly that he was "liable to be sold for the benefit of the state and to be continued in slavery by act of the government, praying to be emancipated and set at liberty." The petition was granted. In the case of a certain negro calling himself James Cromwell, who fled from his master, Major Hudson, a Tory enemy at Long Island, the Governor - and Council voted that "he may be and ought to be protected until the pleasure of the General Assembly may be known."

In February, 1778, "upon the memorial of Moses **Northrup**, **Patience** his wife, and **Eunice Northrup** his daughter, all of New Milford, showing to this Assembly that the said Patience and Eunice are confined in Litchfield goal upon suspicion of treason against this state, that no court proper to try them will sit in said county till August next and that their services are greatly needed at home," praying to be admitted to bail as they could not be under the law. This petition was granted.

Various records show that those who were once Tories were not always Tories. The Loyalists of '76 were often the Patriots of '77 and '78, and in fact on or about 1780 the Tories were mainly banished or repressed. It is, however, seldom that a Patriot has been converted to Toryism, but a few such cases are found, although they generally returned again to the American cause. Nearly all the petitions for favor that we find appear to be from good Tories or those who are weak in the faith. Our state reports are published only to May, 1780, and they contain only such resolutions as received an affirmative vote. Tory petitions that were denied are not placed on the records of the General Assembly and can be found only in various manuscripts, and the trials of the incorrigibles who would suffer anything rather than ask a favor of their opponents can be found only in various court records.

In May, 1777, **Joseph Seely junr.** had been sentenced to two years in jail and a fine of £20. He says "that 'he had served the U. S. in the present war with faithfulness, and professing repentance for his evil conduct, proir4sing reformation in the future" prays for release upon his enlisting into the continental army. Granted, upon his so enlisting and paying or securing the' cost of prosecution arising against him.

**Nathan Daton** of New Milford took an active part on the side of his country at the beginning of the war, yet in November '76, having his mind from some disastrous incidents of the war filled with gloomy apprehensions, sundry of his acquaintances, by the stratagem of magnifying the dangers of this country and by the strongest assurances of the safety and peace he might enjoy under the protection of the regulars on Long Island, deluded and seduced him to so far join them as to put himself under their protection, but Col. Delancy, then commander, tyrannically forced him to bear arms under pain of military execution. He finally escaped, returned to New Milford and was then





sent to Litchfield jail. He was released and pardoned.

**Joshua Stone**, confined in Hartford jail, was a hearty friend to his bleeding country at the beginning of the war, but by the crafty insinuations and persuasive arguments of his near relatives to the contrary and the persuasion of his unfortunate father, he was influenced to go to the British at New York, where he was confined as a spy, but soon after made his escape to Stamford, where he was taken, bound over to the superior court of Fairfield county, then sentenced to three months' imprisonment and a fine of £20, which he peacefully endured, but in working out the fine he was permitted to labor for one Elisha Wadsworth, who, being an enemy to the United States, persuaded him to run away. He was apprehended and confined in Hartford jail. "But by the powerful arguments of a worthy member of the General Assembly on the justice of the American cause, he is fully sensible of his error." He was discharged on paying cost, etc., and further that he "may enlist in the continental army for three years."

**Marchant Wooster**, of Derby, represented that he was "always a friend to the United States and faithfully served as a soldier in '76, but was afterwards unhappily seduced by one Major French, a British officer, to join the enemy, where he was taken a prisoner of war." Professing a hearty and sincere repentance, he was discharged on taking the oath of fidelity.

"**John Elliott junr.** of Middletown hath ever been friendly to the U. S., but by means of a most trying scene of disgrace and disappointment he had met with, he rashly and unadvisedly went to New York, and, expressing deep remorse and penitence, his request for a stay of prosecution was granted." From these and similar petitions, it appears that all able-bodied Tories who went into the territory in possession of the British were forcibly impressed into the service.

Persons were sometimes unjustly detained as suspected Tories. Col. Wadsworth reported three prisoners of whom it was "highly probable that they had never shewn themselves inimical to or being active against the United Colonies," and consequently they were released.

**Benjamin Betts** of Stamford was taken from his bed, carried to Long Island and forced into the British service. He subsequently escaped, and was then arrested, fined and imprisoned for Toryism.

Twenty-six other prisoners whose cases require no special mention were before the General Assembly in various ways as follows: **Seth Hall, Ebenezer Sturgess, Timothy Beach, Gurdon Wetmore** (probably of Middletown), **David Adams junr, Squire Adams, Gideon Lockwood** and **Albert Lockwood**, all of Fairfield: **Daniel Lockwood, Isaac Peck, Gilbert Lockwood, Solomon Wright, Isaac Anderson, James Merrill, Benjamin Wilson** and **Nathan Merrill**, all released on request of the selectmen of Greenwich; **David and Benjamin Peet**, of Stratford; **Jabez Sherwood, junr., Hezk. Holby, Solomon Merrit, junr, Silas Knap, Wm. Marshall, Joseph Galpin** and **Jonathan, Mead**, of Greenwich, and **Roger Veits** of Simsbury.

In October, 1777, "Eight Disciples of **Robert Sandeman**, viz., **Daniel Humphreys, Titus Smith, Richard Woodhull, Thomas Goold, Joseph Pyncheon, Theophilus Chamberlain, Benjamin Smith** and **Wm. Richmond**, all of 'New Haven, who, on account of their religion, were bound in conscience to yield obedience to the King, signified their desire, if they may not continue at New Haven, to remove to some place under the dominion of the King." The request was granted

The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's development. The author has done a great deal of research and has gathered a wealth of material. The report is well written and is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's development.

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The third part of the report deals with the social situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's social development. The author has done a great deal of research and has gathered a wealth of material. The report is well written and is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's social development.

The fourth part of the report deals with the political situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's political development. The author has done a great deal of research and has gathered a wealth of material. The report is well written and is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's political development.

The fifth part of the report deals with the cultural situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's cultural development. The author has done a great deal of research and has gathered a wealth of material. The report is well written and is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's cultural development.

The sixth part of the report deals with the environmental situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's environmental development. The author has done a great deal of research and has gathered a wealth of material. The report is well written and is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's environmental development.

The seventh part of the report deals with the future of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's future development. The author has done a great deal of research and has gathered a wealth of material. The report is well written and is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's future development.



under certain conditions, excepting as to the daughter of Richard Woodhull, "who shall not be removed," as she was heiress to considerable real estate in New Haven.

Seventeen prisoners from Farmington — Nathl. Jones, Siemon Tuttle, Joel Tuttle, Nathaniel Mathews, John Mathews, Riverius Carrington, Lemuel Carrington, Zerubbabel Jerom, jr., Chauncey Jerom, Ezar Dormer, Nehemiah Royce, Abel Royce, George Beckwith, Abel Frisbie, Levi Frisbie, Jared Peck and Abraham Waters—were released on taking the oath of fidelity and paying costs. The committee who examined these prisoners found that they had been much "under the influence of one Nichols, a designing church clergyman (the Rev. James Nichols of Bristol), that they had refused to go in the expedition to Danbury, that Nathaniel Jones and Simeon Tuttle each of them have as they believe a son gone over to the enemy, that they were grossly ignorant of the true grounds of the present war, and that they were convinced since the Danbury alarm that there was no such thing as remaining neutrals." Poor Mr. Jones thought that his son John was in the British service as captain of the marines, but he had been killed in his first engagement about six months before this time.

Dr. William Samuel Johnson of Stratford was one of the most noted men of Connecticut ever arrested for Toryism. In military affairs he was first appointed a lieutenant in 1754, afterwards a captain, and in 1774 was made a lieutenant-colonel. He was a member of the General Assembly at various times from 1761 to 1775, serving in both houses. He was a representative from Connecticut to the Stamp Act Congress at New York in 1765. He drew up the petitions and remonstrances to the King, and about one year thereafter, when the Stamp Act was repealed, he drafted the "Address to the King" for the colony, "returning their most grateful tribute of humble and hearty thanks." He was made a Doctor of Laws by the University of Oxford, January 20, • 1766. In February of the same year he was appointed special agent of Connecticut before the King and Lords in Council at London, where he remained until 1771. He was a judge of the superior court of the colony from 1772 to 1774. He was chosen to represent Connecticut in Congress at Philadelphia, in 1774, but other duties prevented him from accepting. After the Battle of Lexington, in 1775, he was appointed by the unanimous voice of the Assembly one of the committee to enter Boston under a flag of truce with a letter from the Governor to General Gage, then in command of the British forces, pleading for a stay of hostilities. After the Declaration of Independence he persuaded himself that he could not join in a war against England, and resolved to remain neutral. In the midsummer of 1779, after General Tryon raided Fairfield and Norwalk, it was rumored that Stratford was also to be destroyed. Knowing Dr. Johnson to be well acquainted with the British. general, the frightened people insisted that Johnson should seek an interview with Tryon to dissuade him from burning the town. He reluctantly consented. Major General Wolcott, in command of the Continental forces along the coast, sent an officer with a detachment of troops to arrest Dr. Johnson and send him under guard to the town of Farmington. The arrest was made, but Johnson persuaded the officer to accept his word of honor to proceed at once to Farmington and place himself in the custody of the selectmen. On arriving there, one of the selectmen proved to be an acquaintance of Mr. Johnson, and they declared that they "had no business with him," but at Johnson's request they accepted his parole and permitted him to go alone to Lebanon and present himself to the Governor and Council. Johnson solemnly declared "that he never hath communicated with the enemies of this state in any way, nor done or said anything in prejudice of the rights and liberties of this state." He had even "hired a soldier to serve during the war," that in the Stratford matter he only yielded at the "pressing importunity of the people." The board disapproved of the course taken by the people of Stratford, commended the measures taken by General Wolcott as prudent and necessary," etc., but nevertheless, being satisfied with Dr. Johnson's word and oath, he was released.

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But this arrest did not prevent him from receiving further positions of honor from our state. He was one of the three counsellors of Connecticut in the Susquehanna case, was a member of the Continental Congress from 1784 to 1787, he aided in drafting the Federal Constitution, and Dr. Beardsley says that "the first action of the Legislature of Connecticut under the new Federal Constitution was the election of Dr. Johnson as a Senator in Congress." He held this office from 1789 to 1791, and was then president of Columbia College till 1800.

The motives that may have induced many to join the enemy are set forth in an act of the General Assembly passed at its May session in which, after referring to the crime of treason when committed with deliberation as justly deserving the most severe and exemplary punishment, they say: "But whereas it is apprehended that very different motives and principles have influenced the conduct of the deluded few who have taken part against their country—some through ignorance of the nature and grounds of the dispute between Great Britain and America, some through particular prejudice, prospects of reward and gain, others deceived by the treacherous acts of subtle and secret enemies, have without deliberation given way to the force of various temptations, which persons are now convinced of their error and lament their folly. This Assembly, taking the matters aforesaid into consideration and ever willing to exercise leniency and mercy according to the genius of this free and happy constitution as far as may be consistent with justice and public safety, do therefore in tenderness and compassion to such deluded persons resolve and declare, that any and all such persons who shall return into this state on or before the first day of October next and deliver themselves up to the civil authority of the town to which they belong, may and shall be suffered to remain and dwell in safety in such town, provided," etc. And His Honor the Governor was advised to issue a proclamation accordingly.

But it appears that in the following August, the Governor, through a press of more important matters, had not issued said proclamation, and whereas it appeared that "the inimical persons described in said act both in this and the other states have been very active of late in favor of the detestable cause which they have chosen, and many of them on board and assisting the fleet and army who have lately committed the inhuman destruction of several important towns in this state, and otherwise discover great malignity against their country," etc., they advise "his Excellency the Governor not to issue said proclamation until otherwise advised."

Resolutions desiring the Governor to issue a proclamation of pardon had been passed at the May session in 1777. General Putnam had also issued such a proclamation.

Seventeen persons, in addition to those hereinbefore named, escaped from the British and received pardon, as follows: Pardon Tillinghast Taber, of New London; Elijah Elmore, of Stratford; Israel Rowland and Samuel Hawley, of Redding; David Manvill, Jesse Tuttle, Seth Warner, Ephraim Warner, Richard Miles and Daniel Finch, of Waterbury; John Moorehouse and Comfort Benedict, of Danbury; James Benham, of Wallingford; Michael Ames, of New Haven; John Davis junr., of Derby; Elisha Fox (residence not stated) and Nathan Fitch, of Greenwich.

In January, 1778, David Washburn of New Milford represented to the Assembly that he was under the sentence of death, having been convicted in November, 1777, of high treason, and that the particular species of treason for which he was condemned was going on board an armed brig belonging to the enemy. His sentence, with that of David Wheibley, Solomon Ferris and Wm. Peck, all of whom were to be executed on the 10th of November, 1779, for high treason, was suspended until the first Wednesday of March, 1780: but before that time it was arranged to





have these persons exchanged as prisoners of war. Probably they were not executed through fear that the British would retaliate.

In January, 1779, **Nehemiah Scribner** of Norwalk, being under sentence of death for high treason, had his sentence changed to confinement and labor at Newgate prison "during the pleasure of the General Assembly" Other persons whose names are not published in the state reports were held for high treason, as a resolution was passed in January, 1779, that all persons so held in the New Haven, Fairfield and Litchfield jails be transferred to the jail at Hartford.

**Moses Dunbar** was hung for high treason at Execution Hill, Hartford, near the present site of Trinity College, on March 19, 1777. His treason consisted mainly of enlisting men for the British army and having a captain's commission for that purpose. A full account of the affair, including his farewell letter to his children and his dying speech, may be found in the new History of Waterbury. His widow retired to the British army for a time, but afterwards returned to Bristol.

Referring now to non-resident prisoners, **Dr. Benjamin Church** of Boston, a member of the 1774 Congress, was confined at Norwich from November, 1775, to May, with the privilege of going into the jail-yard once a week. He was a supposed Patriot, but was sentenced for treasonable correspondence with the enemy, a letter written in cipher having been found on his person. Many Tories were sent here by order of the New York convention, In May, 1776, a newspaper says that "forty-nine dirty Tory prisoners, taken at Johnston, N. Y., were brought under guard from Albany to Hartford, and others were on the way."

Gov. William Franklin, a natural son of Benjamin Franklin, arrived here in July, 1776, and was confined for a time at Wallingford and afterwards at Middletown. He was the last royal governor of New Jersey, and was sent here by the New Jersey convention as a person "that may prove dangerous." In August, 1776, nineteen Tories from Albany arrived here and were sent to New London, and a little later were removed to the town of Preston. **Mr. Mather**, the mayor of New York, was confined at Litchfield. **John Munroe** and **Henry Van Schaack**, Tory prisoners from Albany, were sent to East Haddam; Munroe had served in the British army and Van Schaak had talked too much. He was released in January, 1777. Judge Jones, who afterwards wrote the History of New York in the Revolutionary War, was at one time a prisoner in Connecticut. In the latter part of 1776 it was found that these non-resident Tories were a great burden, owing to the scarcity of food. In fact, our own people were really suffering, and by the force of circumstances were compelled to send these non-resident prisoners home with the request that they deliver themselves up to the authorities who sent them here. This was done without the knowledge or consent of those who had placed these prisoners here for safe keeping.

Nearly all the names thus referred to in this paper are found in the published colonial and state records, but they include only a small per cent of the Connecticut Tories. The new history of Waterbury republishes from Bronson's history the names of sixty-eight persons who left Waterbury to join the enemy. I find only seven of these names in the colonial and state reports. The History of Stamford names sixty Tories of that town, only five of whom I find in the state reports. No mention has been made of court martials nor of deserters who did not go over to the enemy.

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# THE TORIES OF CONNECTICUT

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BY JAMES SHEPARD

The bitter feeling against the Tories was more intense during the early stages of the war than at any other time. Those who did the least thing supposed to be favorable to the side of England were stigmatized as public enemies. On the first page of the Connecticut C'onrant was a list of "Persons held up to Public view as Enemies to the Country." It included names from other states as well as our own. Stephen Sears of Sharon and Lieut. Ebenezer Orvis of Farmington were so published. Sears made a confession before the committee of inspection which was accepted. In March, 1776, the Committee of Farmington voted, that Lieut. Ebenezer Orvis, Mrs. Lydia Orvis and Hannah Andruss be "advertised in ye Public Gazette as Enemies to their Country." They had persisted in using the prohibited and detested tea. Later Mr. Orvis made a confession which was voted satisfactory.

At a meeting held in Farmington on December 12, 1774, the town voted to approve the doings of the Continental Congress with only two dissenting voices, those of Nehemiah Royce and Matthias Learning. They were immediately voted to be open enemies, and all intercourse with them was ordered to be withdrawn until they retracted. It was even attempted to prevent Royce from sending his children to school; but this was voted down. In March, '775, the committee voted "That Matthias Learning be advertised in the Public Gazette for a contumacious violation of ye whole Association of ye Continental Congress," and that the evidence against Royce was not sufficient to justify such publication. In May, 1777, however, we find Mr. Royce in the Hartford jail as an inimical person.

Mr. Julius Gay's paper on "Farmington in the Revolution" gives us the story of this Matthias Learning. He inadvertently conveyed his real estate to his brother, who absconded and the property was confiscated. This brother, Jeremiah Learning, D. D., was the Episcopal minister who went off with the British at the burning of Norwalk, and is the man before referred to who left the negro Pomp. At one time a mob took his pictures defaced it, and nailed it to a sign post head downwards. He was put in prison and there contracted a hip disease that made him a cripple for life. Matthias petitioned the General Assembly in 1783 for relief, which was denied. He finally had JJ8o voted him, pay. able in 1787, but before it became due the treasury was bankrupt. In 1788 the prominent men of Farmington petitioned the General Assembly to assist him in his old age and distress, but no action was taken on said petition, and now, in the old cemetery at Farmington we find a tombstone on which is inscribed, "In memory of Mr. Matthias Learning WTho hars got Beyond the reach of parcecushion, The life of man is vanity."

Judah and David Learning of Farmington, in their petition for release from jail, said that they were provoked to imprudent utterings by injurious treatment involving "losses of clothing and wages," and the committee who examined them said that their statement was true.

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The Rev. John Smalley, of New Britian, was called a Tory because he advised his hearers that they were not bound to keep the Continental Fast. He also spoke reprovingly of fighting against the king, but afterwards he became a firm adherent to the American cause.

An extract from a letter in the Courant shows the feeling against the Tories in May, 1776. "By these miscreants the British prisoners are assisted to escape. If these infernal enemies are suffered to proceed in their hellish schemes our ruin is certain, but if they are destroyed the power of Hell and Britain will never prevail against us."

Col. Joseph Barnum, whose son was captured by the British at Fort Washington and literally starved to death, was so exasperated that he took his gun and went in pursuit of Tories to revenge on them the death of his son. He soon saw an innocent Tory at work on his own land, took deliberate aim and shot him, wounding him severely but not fatally.

In July, 1775, a brig owned by Josiah Winslow a well known royalist of Boston, with some 19,000 gallons of molasses on board was forced by a storm into Stonington harbor. The people of Norwich captured it as a prize for the use of the state. It proved a great comfort and luxury to the Continental soldiers and was referred to as "tory molasses."

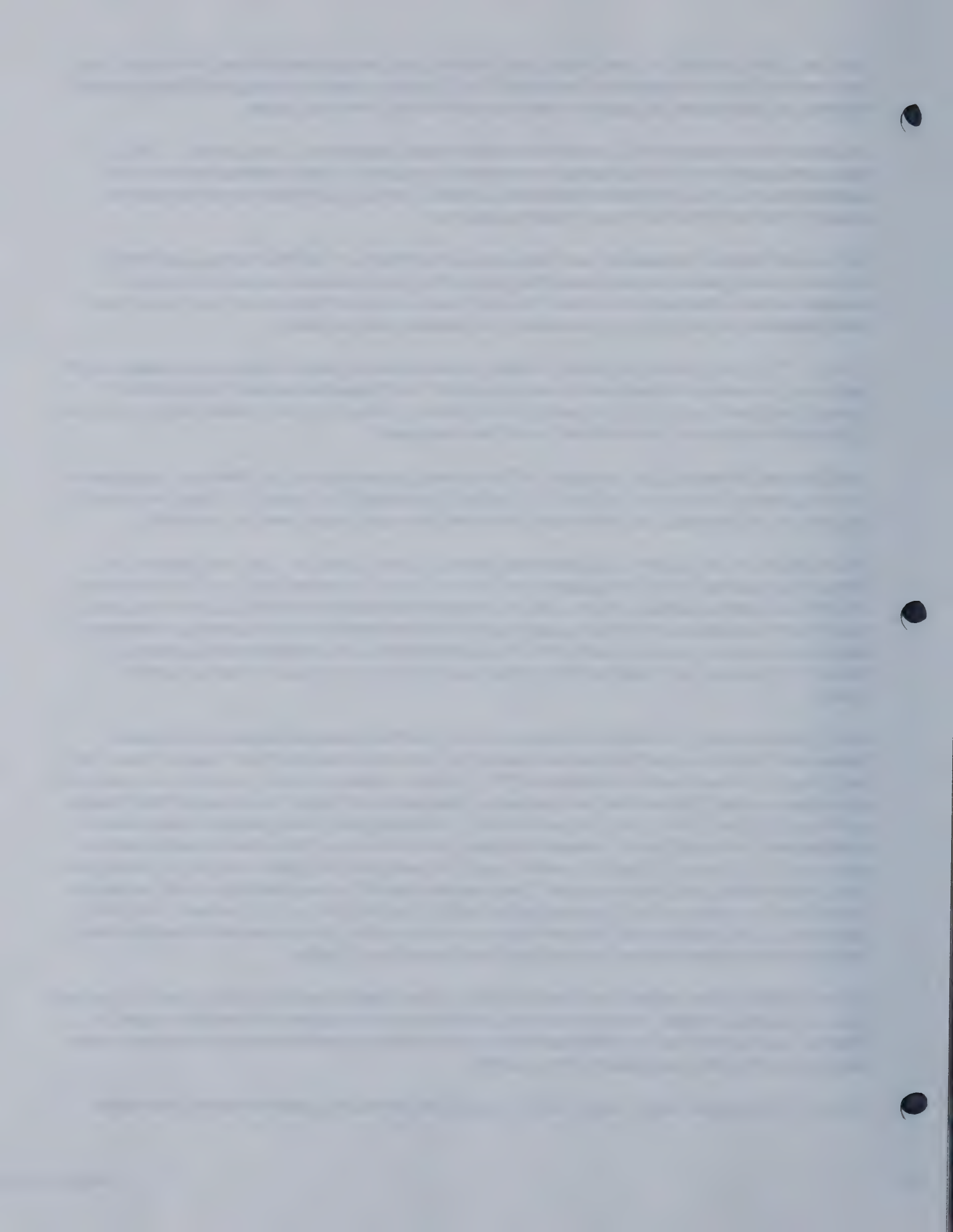
The Riflemen of New Milford compelled a Tory to walk before them to Litchfield and carry one of his own geese all the way in his hand. At Litchfield they tarred him, made him pluck his goose for his own coat of feathers, and then made him kneel down and thank them for their lenity.

The members of the Church of England had their full share of trouble. The most rabid of the Whigs believed that every Episcopalian was either d.n open or secret Tory. In 1775, Waterbury voted to have two separate schools, one for Presbyterians and one for the Church of England. In Watertown the windows of the Episcopal church were demolished and the principal members of that church were confined on their farms. In Cheshire they were prevented from building a church. In Woodbury an Episcopal clergyman was fired at from ambush. Later he went to Canada.

Rev. Samuel Seabury, a native of Connecticut and the first Episcopal Bishop in the United States, was taken by about forty armed men at his grammar school at West Chester, New York, and brought to New Haven in November 1775. He was carried in triumph about the city, escorted by a large number of armed men who arranged themselves in front of the house of Capt. Sears and there fired two cannon and made other noisy demonstrations, after which he was placed in confinement. In his petition for release he states that on the day of his arrest some forty armed men went to his house, ordered his wife to open his desk, took his papers and all his money save one English shilling and a few coppers. They insulted one of his daughters by running a bayonet through her cap while on her head and twice through the handkerchief on her neck. They also destroyed a quilt around which his family was at work by cutting it in pieces with their bayonets. He was ordered to be removed by the New York Committee of Safety.

At one period a gloom settled over the prospects of the colonists and the Church party felt almost sure of a speedy triumph, some of the most enthusiastic met together at Waterbury. says Dr. Bronson, and determined in what manner the farms of their opponents should be divided among themselves after the subjugation of the country.

In July, the Episcopal clergy, whose duty it was to pray for the king and for victory over all his





enemies, met in convention and resolved that such prayers " would draw upon themselves inevitable destruction." For a time all public service was suspended and all of their churches closed save those at Newtown and Redding, which were presided over by Rev. John Beach. Mr. Beach declared that "he would pray for the king till the rebels cut out his tongue." Rev. X. A. Welton says of Beach, in the history of Redding, that "a squad of soldiers marched into his church in Newtown and threatened to shoot him if he prayed for the king, but when, regardless of their threats, he went on without so much as a tremor in his voice, to offer the forbidden supplication, they were so struck with admiration for his courage that they stacked arms and remained to listen to the sermon."

A band of soldiers once took him to where an axe and block were prepared for killing him, and one of them said, "Now you old sinner say your last prayer." He knelt down and prayed, "God bless King George, and forgive all his enemies and mine for Christ's sake." They let him go.

He was once shot at when in the pulpit at Redding, and the bullet lodged in the sounding-board about a foot above his head. The congregation sprang to their feet to rush from the church, but he soon quieted them and proceeded with his discourse as if nothing had happened.

The Episcopal churches were not only closed by this order but their ministers after a time were mostly banished and the great majority of their people had removed from the state. When they again began to hold public services they generally omitted the prayer for the king or else omitted the Liturgy entirely. The Rev. Matthew Graves, of New London, refused to omit the prayer for the king and as a consequence he was driven from his church on Sunday before he had time to divest himself of his suplice.

The Rev. Abraham Jarvis, of Middletown, who presided over the Episcopal Convention of 1776, opened his church on Sundays, but an attendant says that he "only read some chapters in the Bible and preached a sermon in his own clothes, not daring to read the church service."

The northwest portion of Bristol and the adjoining portions of the town of Burlington, Harwinton and Plymouth was a stronghold of toryism, and meetings were held there of Tories from all parts of the state.

The Rev. James Nichols began his services in Bristol in 1773. He was the last Episcopal minister that went to England for ordination. He was the 4'designing church clergyman" before referred to in connection with seventeen prisoners from Farmington, most if not all of whom were of his congregation. it is said that he was shot at several times, also that he was taken from a cellar at East Plymouth, tarred and feathered and then dragged in a brook. By these and other acts he was banished to Litchfield. His records show that between the latter part of 1776 and 1781 he administered baptism in his cure on five different occasions. In 1782 we find him again in charge of the church at Bristol.

In the Burlington ledges, at the southwest part of the town, is a cave known as the Tory den. Stephen Graves and his bride of about nineteen lived in a log cabin in the southeast part of Hawinton, within a mile of this cave.. He was drafted, hired a substitute, and while his substitute was still in the service at Grave's expense, he was again drafted. This he considered unjust and freely expressed his opinion, thereby incurring the enmity of Capt. Wilson and his company of Sons of Liberty. Soon after this he went to visit his mother at Saybrook. He was pursued and arrested as a deserter, his captors. feasting at the taverns, making him pay all the bills. He came so peacefully that they relaxed their vigilance somewhat and he made his escape. On reaching





home he hid himself without making his presence known until after his pursuers had been there and his good wife had assured them that Mr. Graves. was in Saybrook on a visit. At one time Graves was tied to a tree and severely whipped. At another time it is said that he was hung to a chestnut tree near his house but let down again before he was severely injured. Many of his neighbors were Tories. For sometime he and several companions were compelled to live at the Tory den, and each night the young Mrs. Graves went through the dark and 'pathless woods, over rocky ledges, to carry them food. The den was often resorted to for shorter periods of refuge. When at work on their Jarms a band of Tories worked first one farm and then another, so that - they might protect themselves. If working alone, or when an overpowering party of Sons of Liberty approached them, they would flee to the Tory den. Their faithful wives were always on the watch, and would blow a horn or a conch shell as a warning at the sight of any of Capt. Wilson's men, or other Tory hunters. These horns were a source of great annoyance to Capt. Wilson, and he once presented his pistol to the head of a young girl that lived: with Mrs. Graves and threatened to shoot her if she did not tell him where the noisy conch shell was concealed.

A Bristol Tory, by the name of Potter, was hung until nearly dead, and one, Joel Tuttle, was hung to an oak tree on Federal Hill in Bristol, and left alone to die. A Whig by the name of Hungerford cut him down, but the kindhearted Hungerford dared not render other assistance and left the Tory lying insensible on the ground. During the night he so far recovered as to be able to make his way to the Tory den. Many efforts were made to find this hiding place, but its location was never known to any but the Tories until after the close of the war.

Chauncey Jerome of Bristol, a very energetic and powerful man, was taken by a crowd, his shirt pulled up over his head and then his uplifted shirt and arms, with cords around his wrists, were tied to a limb of a tree, preparatory to whipping his bare back. The rod was raised for the first stroke when by a desperate effort the victim escaped and the blow fell upon the body of the tree. With the shirt still hanging on the tree, the hare-back man was soon in the house of his brother-in-law, Jonathan Pond, who stood at the door with gun in hand forbidding any to enter. Mr. Jerome married the widow of his brother-in-law, Moses Dunbar, (Dunbar's first wife was Jerome's sister), and while driving to Hartford one day they stopped for lunch by the roadside before entering the city. Pointing to the place of execution, Mrs. Jerome remarked, "my former husband lies buried under that tree." They removed to Nova Scotia until after the war.

There seems no room for doubt that one of the greatest obstacles the Patriots of the Revolution had to contend with was the Tory. In nearly if not every battle we find in addition to the British regulars in uniform, one or more companies of Tories in ordinary dress. The Tory, Col. John Butler, of Tryon, New York, was in command of the four hundred Tories and Indians at the horrible massacre of Wyoming, which was then a part of Connecticut.

Tory guides led the British Gen. Tryon at the burning of Danbury. He made his headquarters of the house of the Tory, Joseph Dibble. This Dibble was once taken out of his bed at night, by men in disguise, and ducked until he expected to perish. Large stores of provisions were in the Episcopal church at Danbury, and in Dibble's barn. These goods were taken into the Street and burnt so as to spare said buildings. A white cross was marked on the Tory buildings to signify "that the destroying angel would pass them unharmed." The Congregational church and every house save those that had the mystic sign upon them were destroyed. "The women and children fled from the jeers of their comfortable Tory neighbors into lonely lanes, damp pastures and leafless woods." A man by the name of Jarvis was one of these Tory guides. He went to Nova Scotia for a time and returned to Danbury to live, but a crowd soon surrounded his father's





house, prepared to tar and feather him. His sister concealed him in an ash oven until he could make his escape, never to again set foot in his native place. Another of the Tory guides was Eli Benedict of Danbury. He attempted to reside there again but was threatened with a ride on a wooden horse and fled. Another of the Danbury guides 'was Isaac W. Shelton. lie joined the British on Lomr Island, and was at, one time confined in Hartford jail. After the war he lived in Bristol and acquired a valuable property.

The Tories continually carried on an illicit trade between Connecticut and Long Island. They carried off Tory recruits for the British, and Tory families with large quantities of provisions that were sadly needed here, and much of this work was done under a British flag of truce.

Rev. Dr. Mather and his four sons, of Stamford, were taken from the parsonage at night by eight Tories and carried to New York. One Sunday a party of British troops, mostly Tories, took 48 prisoners, including Dr. Mather, from the church at Darien, while they were singing the first hymn. They stole the horses belonging to the church-goers, and robbed both men and women of their valuables.

Lieut. Barber, of Croton, while taking a walk was shot through the body, by concealed Tories, and died immediately. As to Benedict Arnold, I need only mention his name.

The British and Tories, under Gen Tryon, burned Norwalk and Fairfield in 1779, and the Episcopal clergyman of Norwalk and many Tories went off with them.

New Haven was plundered under the guidance of William Chandler, a captain of a Tory command, assisted by his brother Thomas. Besides robbery and wanton destruction of property, aged citizens, women and children were shamefully abused. The Rev. Dr. Daggett, president of Yale college, would have been murdered had it not been for the interference of the Tory guide Chandler, who was formerly one of Dr. Daggett's pupils. William and Thomas Chandler were the sons of Joshua Chandler whose property in New Haven, valued at £30,000, was confiscated. In March, 1787, they attempted to cross the Bay of Fundy to meet the Commissioners on Loyalists' Claims at St. Johns, in hopes to obtain compensation for the confiscated property. They were shipwrecked on the way, and William, the guide, was crushed to death between the vessel and the rocks. The father landed but soon perished by a fall from a precipice and others of the party perished from exposure.

The British agents long endeavored to make the United States, rather than Great Britain, indemnify the Tories, but Dr. Franklin intimated that an equivalent would be the British indemnification for ravages by their troops, so the matter was dropped.

The many personal abuses and atrocious acts committed during the war only show what a desperate struggle our people passed through. Families were divided. Joseph Ferris of Stamford, a captain in the British army, was taken prisoner by his brother-in-law. Zerubbabel Jerome of Bristol, and his sons Robert, Thomas and Asahel, all four served in the Continental army, the latter dying in the service. His sons Chauncey and Zerubbabel, Jr., were in the Hartford jail together as Tories in 1777. His son-in-law, Moses Dunbar, was executed for high treason. Stephen Graves, the Tory, was another son-in-law, as was also Jonathan Pond, who defended Chauncey Jerome. His fourth son-in-law, Joseph Spencer, cannot be definitely placed on either side.

The father of Moses Dunbar was a firm Patriot and they were bitterly opposed to each other,

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and techniques used to collect and analyze data. It includes a detailed description of the experimental procedures and the statistical analysis performed.

3. The third part of the document presents the results of the study. It includes a series of tables and graphs that illustrate the findings of the research. The data shows a clear trend in the relationship between the variables studied.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the implications of the findings. It highlights the potential applications of the research in various fields and the need for further investigation. The authors conclude that the study has provided valuable insights into the topic.

5. The fifth part of the document provides a comprehensive overview of the literature related to the study. It includes a critical analysis of previous research and identifies the gaps in the current knowledge. The authors also discuss the limitations of the study and the need for future research to address these issues.

6. The sixth part of the document contains the conclusions of the study. It summarizes the main findings and the overall contribution of the research. The authors express their gratitude to the funding agencies and the participants who made the study possible.

7. The seventh part of the document includes the references and the appendix. The references list the sources used in the study, and the appendix provides additional information and data that support the findings of the research. The authors also include a list of abbreviations and a glossary of terms.

8. The eighth part of the document is the final section, which contains the authors' contact information and a statement of their commitment to the integrity of the research. The authors also provide a brief biography of each of them.



both in politics and religion. By such divisions many descendants from Tory families are eligible to the Sons of the Revolution.

After the war most of the absconding Tories returned and mingled with the people as before. An exception to this is found in a son of the Rev. James Scovil of Waterbury. After about sixty years residence in New Brunswick, the grievances of this son were as fresh and sensitive as when first inflicted, and he said that "no temptation that earth could present would ever induce him to set foot on soil where he had received such unprovoked and cruel wrongs."

As a rule however Tories were not so sensitive; they entered into the management of public affairs by voting and holding office, after such privileges had been reluctantly given them. In 1783 the town of New Haven voted to instruct their representatives "to use their influence with the next General Assembly in an especial manner, to prevent the return of these miscreants who have deserted their country's cause and joined the enemies of this and the United States of America during the late contest." But one year after this, Dr. Stiles wrote in his diary, "This day, town meeting voted to readmit the Tories." When the city of New Haven was organized in 1784 there were eight Tories in the common council and about one-third of all the voters in New Haven were Tories. This proportion of Tories may be above the average, but throughout the state, after peace, Patriots and Tories generally dwelt together in harmony, in striking contrast to the Revolutionary times.

Prejudice, passion and social contagion are responsible for much that calm deliberation would not have prompted. We can all pity the Tory, but the purpose of this paper is Tory history with neither condemnation nor approval; still I must say that whatever unwarranted abuses the Tory may have received, those high in authority, the General Assembly, Governor and Council of Safety, were always ready to forgive and "ever willing to exercise lenity and mercy— as far as may be consistent with justice and publick safety." They had large and noble hearts, full of "tenderness and compassion," and thus our state was much more indulgent and charitable to the Tories, than most of our sister states.

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## TORY CONNECTION and why

Hall's "Ancient Records of Norwalk", page 126:

### Against Riotous Proceedings:

November 12, 1765. Whereas there has been diverse routs and tumultuous and riotous assemblies of disorderly people in the land, and some in this colony; and there are diverse reports of many threatenings of such further tumults and riotous assemblies, to the intent of doing mischief to the persons and properties of diverse people, and especially against some in the principall places of rule and government; all of which are contrary to the peace, and to subvert all power and government; and whereas the inhabitants of the town of Norwalk, in general town meeting assembled, taking these matters into serious consideration, think it their indispensable duty to bear proper and publick testimony against such unlawful proceedings; and accordingly do declare their utter abhorrence and detestation of all such routs, tumults, and riotous assemblies, and such alarming threatenings of mischiefs; and as they think themselves bound in loyalty to the King, and for the security of the privileges of the colony, and of the lives and properties of ye subjects, do hereby further declare, they will use their utmost endeavor, in all proper and legal ways, to prevent and suppress all such disorders, so far as appertains to them to be aiding and assisting therein.

.....

### The Nullifiers of Poplar Plains.....page 128, Hall's

Jan. 8, 1776.....Whereas, information hath this day been made to this meeting, that there are numbers of the inhabitants of this town, living at Poplar Plain and parts adjacent, have ~~united~~ united with numbers of the inhabitants of Fairfield, living in Norfield Parish and the Western part of the town of Fairfield adjoining to this town, have unwarrantably formed themselves into a body, and call themselves a committee, and being so formed, have resolved and determined that every person that is in debt shall not be liable to be sued for the same, not be liable to pay any interest on obligations, but be discharged therefrom; and that justices of the peace shall not sign any writ, or grant any executions, and the officers shall not serve either writs or executions; and have also in case any creditor shall attempt to sue for his debt or require interest on obligations, or a justice sign a writ, or any officer serve the same, they will unitedly prevent and oppose with all the force and strength they can procure the same.....This meeting, taking into consideration the aforesaid matters of information, and the aforesaid illegal resolves and determinations, are of opinion that the same have a direct tendency to set aside all law, and leave us in the hands of a merciless set of men, and to throw us into confusion and distraction, and to deprive us of all our valuable and constitutional rights. We therefore do hereby vote and agree to use our utmost influence, power, and strength, to disapprove and do discountenance every such illegal measure; and do everything in our power, unitedly, to aid and assist the authority in suppressing the same in every proper and legal way.

This may or may not have anything to do with the Tory situation, but shows there was a bunch at Poplar Plain and Norfield who did not meet the approval of the general Norwalk government.

.....

Rev. Leaming's part in turning the church folks to Toryism.

Hall's page 172.....Rev. Mr. Leaming was a strong Tory. He went off with the British when the town was burned.

Hall's page 180.....From Mrs. Mary Esther St. John, wife of William.....Mr. Leaming she knew well. She attended his church. He continued to pray for the King as long as he dared to. He went away with the British. It was sad to live in the midst of war, but what was most unpleasant of all was the difference of sentiments among neighbors and kindred. The above

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the integrity of the financial system and for the ability to detect and prevent fraud. The text also mentions the need for regular audits and the role of independent auditors in ensuring the reliability of the financial statements.

2. The second part of the document focuses on the role of the central bank in maintaining the stability of the financial system. It discusses the various tools and instruments that the central bank can use to influence the money supply and interest rates. The text also mentions the importance of the central bank acting as a lender of last resort to prevent bank runs and maintain confidence in the banking system.

3. The third part of the document discusses the role of the government in regulating the financial system. It mentions the various laws and regulations that govern the operation of banks and other financial institutions. The text also mentions the importance of the government ensuring that the financial system is fair and transparent, and that it is able to protect the interests of the public.

information might have been from a woman that Mary knew and not her own experience as she is telling about a woman who helped to save the Belden house and that she had been talking to.

Apparently the following were a part of the congregation of Rev. Leaming because they were assigned to "collect the rate of Rev. Leaming"

1764.....Thomas Hanford was appointed  
1765.....Nathan Burwell, Jr.  
1766.....Ebenezer Church  
1767.....Goold Hoyt  
1768.....Asa Hoyt  
1769.....Garner Olmstead  
1770.....John Saunders  
1771.....Matthew Reed  
1772.....Micajah Nash  
1773.....Garner Olmstead  
1774.....Garner Olmstead  
1775.....Daniel Church  
1776.....Samuel White  
1777.....Barnabas Merwine  
1778.....John Saunders

Before the next annual meeting the town of Norwalk was burned by the British, and Rev. Leaming retired with the invaders to their fleet.

.....

#### LIST OF POSSIBLE TORIES 1781

We the Subscribers Agreeable to an Act and Appointment of the Honourable General Assembly having been called upon and Requested by the Civil Authority in Selectmen of the Town of Norwalk to Enquire into the Character and Conduct of a Number of persons whose names are contained in a List or roll by them presented to us as Inimical and Dangerous to the Liberties and Independence of the thirteen States of America: And we having Duly Examined into the premises are of the opinion that the following persons whose names are hereafter Enpressed (?) are Inimical and Dangerous as aforesaid and therefore give Judgment and Order that their names be Enrolled in the Town Clerk's Office in ye Town of Norwalk as Dangerous and Inimical as aforesaid for the purposes Mentioned in an Act of the General Assembly of this State Entitled an Act more Effectually to prevent Robberies and plumder from our Open and Secret Enemies

Viz, Obediah Wright, Nathan Burwell, Jr., Thomas Hanford, Nathan Jarvis, Thomas Fairweather, David Bolt, Peter White, Hezekiah Whitney, Jr (?), Nathan Gregory, Phillip Scribner, Hezekiah Belden, John Belden, Edward Nash, Gershom Raymond, James Fillio, William Bolt, Ebenezer Church, David Lambert, Goold Hayt, Abraham Whitney, John Sanders, Jun., Garner Olmstead, Richard Patrick, Nathan Fitch and John Fitch, all of Norwalk aforesaid, each of the above named persons having first been Duly Notified and Cited to Appear before us at time and place by us Appointed for that purpose to shew reason , if





any, they had why their names should not be Enrolled as aforesaid. Done at Norwalk this 20<sup>th</sup> Day of April A.D. 1781

By us.....Daniel Sherman

Benjamin Henman (?)

Andrew Adam

Increase Moseley.....Committee

To the Town Clerk of Norwalk

Rec. to Record

April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1781 and

Recorded by me Samuel Gruman, Reg.

.....

Note from the list of church members of Rev. Leaming above we have many of the same people on the list of Tories that the government was investigating and considered that they were inimical and dangerous.

Thomas Hanford

Nathan Burwell, Jr.

Ebenezer Church

Goold Hoyt

Garner Olmstead

John Saunders

Also a White and a Nash

.....

Hall;s page 175, under reminisces of Thomas Benedict:

Mr. Leaming used to speak on the wickedness of resisting the King; and most of the tories were of his congregation.....according to his creed and preaching, we "were only a parcel of rebels". There would not have been so many tories but for his preaching up such doctrine. He went off with the British.

.....





We the Subscribers Agreeable to an Act and Appointment of the  
and requested by the Civil Authority and Selectmen of the Town  
of a Number of persons whose names are Contained in a List  
to the Liberties and Independence of the United States of America  
of Opinion that the following persons whose names are  
Said and therefore give judgment and Order that their names  
Norwalk as Dangerous and Inimical as afore Said for the peace  
of this State Enacted an Act more Effectually to prevent Rob  
Viz: Obadiah Wright Nathan Burwell Jun. Thomas Hanford  
White Mzekiah Whitney J. R. Nathan Gregory Phillip Scribner  
Raymond James Fittie William Bell Ebenezer Church David  
Garner Olmsted Richard Patrick Nathan Fitch and John Fitch  
first been Duly Notified and Cited to Appear before us at time as  
if any they had why their names should not be Enrolled as afore S.

To the Town Clerk  
of Norwalk

Rec. to Record

April 21<sup>st</sup> 1781

} and Recorded

Know all Men by these presents that I John Rogers of Nor  
for the Consideration of Twenty five pounds lawfull money rec. to my  
give grant bargain Sell and Confirm unto him the Said John Hanford  
lying in Said Norwalk Situate at Hillys field So Called in Quantity five  
by the Said John Hanford land North by highway and the Said John Han





We the Subscribers Agreeable to an Act and Appointment of the Honourable Gen<sup>l</sup>. Assembly having been Called upon and requested by the Civil Authority and Selectmen of the Town of Norwalk to Enquire into the Character and Conduct of a Number of persons whose names are Contained in a List or roll by them presented to us as Inimical & Dangerous to the Liberties and Independence of the United States of America: And we having Duly Examined into the premises are of Opinion that the following persons whose names are hereafter Expressed are Inimical and Dangerous as aforesaid and therefore give judgment and Order that their names be Enrolled in the Town Clerk's Office in S<sup>d</sup>. Town of Norwalk as Dangerous and Inimical as aforesaid for the purposes Mentioned in an Act of the Gen<sup>l</sup>. Assembly of this State Entituled an Act more Effectually to prevent Robberies and plunder from Our Open & Secret Enemies -

Viz<sup>t</sup>. Obadiah Wright Nathan Burwell Jun<sup>r</sup>. Thomas Hanford Nathan Jarvis Thomas Fairweather David Bolt Peter White Hezekiah Whitney J<sup>r</sup>. Nathan Gregory Phillip Scribner Hezekiah Betden John Betden Edward Nash Gershom Raymond James Tillis William Bolt Ebenezer Church David <sup>born</sup> Gook Hayt Abraham Whitney John Sanders Jun<sup>r</sup>. Gannett Olmsted Richard Patrick Nathan Fitch and John Fitch all of Norwalk aforesaid Each of the above named persons <sup>having</sup> first been Duly Notified and Cited to Appear before us at time and place by us Appointed for that purpose to shew reason if any they had why their names should not be Enrolled as aforesaid Done at Norwalk this 20<sup>th</sup>. Day of April A. D. 1781

To the Town Clerk  
of Norwalk -

By us  
Daniel Sherman  
Benj<sup>a</sup>. Henman  
And<sup>s</sup>. Adams  
Increase Mosely

Com<sup>rs</sup>

Rec<sup>d</sup>. to Record }  
April 21<sup>st</sup> 1781 } and Recorded <sup>ff<sup>ce</sup></sup> me Samuel Guman Reg<sup>r</sup>

Know all Men by these presents that I John Rogers of Norwalk in the County of Fairfield and State of Connecticut for the Consideration of Twenty five pounds lawfull money rec<sup>d</sup>. to my full Satisfaction of John Hanford of Norwalk aforesaid do give grant bargain Sell and Confirm unto him the Said John Hanford his heirs and Assigns for ever a certain piece of land lying in said Norwalk Situate at Hillys field so Called in Quantity five Acres be the Same more or less bounded East and West by the Said John Hanford's land North by highway and the Said John Hanford's land and Southerly & Southeasterly by Matthew Reed &



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or roll by them presented to us as Inimical & Dangerous  
And we having Duly Examined into the premises are  
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said be Enrolled in the Town Clerk's Office in S<sup>d</sup>. Town of  
Norwalk Mentioned in an Act of the Gen<sup>l</sup>. Assembly of  
Robberies and plunder from Our Open & Secret Enemies ~

Nathan Jarvis Thomas Fairweather David Bolt Peter  
or Nehemiah Betden John Betden Edward Nash Gershom  
Gould Hayt Abraham Whitney John Sanders Jun<sup>r</sup>  
all of Norwalk afore Said Each of the above named persons  
and place by us Appointed for that purpose to Shew reason  
Done at Norwalk this 20<sup>th</sup>. Day of April A. 1781 ~

By us

Daniel Sherman

Benj<sup>a</sup>. Henman

And<sup>s</sup>. Adams

Increase Moseley

} Com<sup>rs</sup>

W<sup>m</sup>. Samuel Gruman Reg<sup>r</sup>

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the national norm of 19.8%.<sup>9</sup>

The best picture of Connecticut Loyalists currently available emerges from Wallace Brown's statistical analyses of the claims presented to the Parliamentary commission enquiring into the losses of American Loyalists.<sup>10</sup> There were very few claimants from Connecticut; they constituted only .08% of the state's population, a relatively low proportion when compared to other areas. These Connecticut Loyalists were overwhelmingly (84%) native-born. They tended to concentrate in coastal areas, particularly the southwestern part of the state; 55% of all Connecticut claimants were from Fairfield County. Stamford, with eighteen claimants out of a population of 3,563, was the leading center of Loyalism, and Norwalk followed a close second with twenty-five claimants in a population of 4,388. Sixty-two per cent of all Connecticut Loyalists served in the British armed forces, or in some other official capacity, a very high proportion according to Brown.<sup>11</sup>

There was a "distinct but not overwhelming" tendency toward commerce among the Connecticut Loyalist claimants. Forty-three per cent were involved in some form of commerce; among these, 14% were artisans and 25% were merchants and shopkeepers. As might be expected in an agricultural state, a large proportion of the claimants (42%) were farmers and landowners, although 37 of the 54 persons listed by Brown in this group claimed losses of £500 or less. Eight per cent of the claimants were professionals, and the remaining 6% were crown officials.<sup>12</sup>

Most of the Connecticut claimants had only moderate means. Almost half claimed losses of £500 or less, 70% listed losses under £1,000, 84% claimed under £2,000, and only twelve persons claimed over £5,000 in damages. Connecticut lacked the merchant aristocracy of Massachusetts the strength of Connecticut Loyalism seemed to be among moderately prosperous, conservative farmer

supported by small numbers of artisans, lawyers, royal officers, and Anglican ministers. Brown reconciles his discovery of only moderate wealth among the claimants with the popular contemporary view that Connecticut Loyalists were rich, by postulating that the most affluent (and influential) either were allowed to remain at home or were encouraged to soon return from exile. In conclusion, Brown writes, "Connecticut Loyalism did not command a mass following but it did command considerable support from the masses."<sup>13</sup>

The validity of Brown's findings, based only on the Loyalist transcripts, have been severely questioned by Eugene Fingerhut in a 1968 article in the *William and Mary Quarterly*.<sup>14</sup> According to Fingerhut, many Loyalists did not place claims with the Wilmot Commission either because they had lost the necessary legal papers (in order to qualify for payment, each claimant had to prove overt mention of his Loyalism in some official American document), or simply because they thought the prospects of a return too low and were too poor to support the legal costs of a claim. Many claimants apparently did not seek compensation for all their losses, particularly personal property, building, and improvements. Those counties which produced 75% of the claimants were close to British-held areas late in the war; this is particularly true in Connecticut where 89% of the claimants lived in counties adjacent to New York.<sup>15</sup>

Generalizations about the occupations of the Loyalists, based on their claims, are complicated by the fact that no provision was made in the claims for recording those persons with more than one economic interest; (the man who was a farmer as well as a miller, shopkeeper or blacksmith was a relatively common phenomenon in eighteenth century America). Furthermore, the commission did not consider claims for any of the following: deprivations of unimproved lands, unpaid official salaries, uncollected rents, lost business profits,





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depreciations in currency values, or alienations from properties purchased after the Revolutionary War began.<sup>16</sup>

Fingerhut calls special attention to the existence of fraud among the claims, citing numerous instances of collusion among the petitioners. He also points out that the great preponderance of claims are within 10% above the \$100, \$1,000, \$10,000 cut-off points established by the Commission. He therefore hypothesizes that most persons in the last third of each group raised their requests to the next higher category. Consequently the Loyalist claims are a difficult and highly complex sample from which to work. They fail to present the entire picture. And there is always the problem that "many of those who took the British side did not emigrate, and most of the emigrants were not claimants."<sup>17</sup>

Fingerhut concludes that the Loyalist transcripts "overemphasize the commercial, professional, office-holding eastern Loyalists and those persons who could get to the British more easily than isolated Loyalists, most of whom were probably farmers." "Since the transcripts, according to Fingerhut, "do not present accurate quantitative data about the claimant's possession one may seriously question a statistical use of this source to describe anything beyond what compensations and pensions the petitioners sought."

I have tried to bear Fingerhut's criticisms in mind in the conduct of my own study of the Loyalist situation in Greenwich, Stamford and Norwalk. I have gone beyond the Loyalist transcripts to the local court records themselves, compiling a much larger sample for a more geographically limited area. I chose Fairfield County for the focus of my studies on the basis of its reputation as the most active center of Connecticut Loyalism, hoping to find there an abundance of Loyalist records that would produce

a sample large enough to be statistically satisfying. While such was not always the case, my research did tentatively confirm my suspicions that a local study of Loyalists, carried on with greater thoroughness than has previously been done would produce a sample group who were even less wealthy and less commercially/professionally oriented than Brown's Connecticut Loyalist claimants.

Some of the reasons for the heavy concentration of Loyalists in Fairfield County are obvious. Its proximity to New York and Long Island, both in British hands for most of the war, was certainly a major factor. Indeed, the presence of British forces nearby was the great "precipitator of Loyalism" everywhere in the colonies.<sup>19</sup> (An increase in the number of Loyalists fleeing to British can be observed in both 1777 and 1779, the dates of the two major British incursions into Connecticut, the Danbury raid and the burning of Norwalk, Fairfield and New Haven.)<sup>20</sup>

There were, however, more profound and deep-seated reasons for Fairfield County's Loyalist affections. They are deeply rooted in the conservative religious and cultural heritage of the region, which provided the context out of which Loyalism later grew.<sup>21</sup>

The origins of conservatism in western Connecticut date back almost a generation before the Revolution to the religious controversy of the Great Awakening.<sup>22</sup> New Light revivalists, capitalizing on long-standing dissatisfaction with the Saybrook Platform and the Halfway Covenant, sought to establish separate churches whose practices would be more in keeping with what they interpreted to be the Calvinist tradition. Eastern Connecticut became the center of the New Light faction, while the towns west of the Connecticut River, and Fairfield County in particular, were bastions of Old Light Arminianism.<sup>23</sup>





The disruptive tactics of radical evangelists, like James Davenport of Long Island, alienated the conservative partisans of the Established Church. The General Assembly withdrew legal toleration for non-conforming groups in 1743, beginning a decade and a half of persecution. The New Light party, however, gradually wrested political control away from their opponents, winning some measure of legal recognition.<sup>24</sup> By 1755, the Old Lights were on the defensive and were beginning to behave like a minority party. The situation was so changed by 1763 that William Samuel Johnson, a prominent conservative and leading Anglican from Stratford, wrote:

The N.L. within my short memory were a small party, merely a religious one . . . in this short period by their continual struggles they have acquired such an influence as to be nearly ruling part of the Government.<sup>25</sup>

Johnson attributed New Light success to the superior attention that its followers gave "to civil affairs and close union among themselves in politics."<sup>26</sup> The final impact of New Light agitation during the Great Awakening was a weakening in the authority and prestige of the conservative magistrates of the Standing Order, many of whom were turned out of office as a result of religious factionalism.<sup>27</sup> Connecticut was never again to return entirely to its former "steady habits."<sup>28</sup>

The presence of numerous Old Light congregations was not the only conservative religious influence in western Connecticut; Anglicanism also played an important role in shaping the political complexion of the area. The "political science" of Anglicanism taught obedience to lawfully ordained authority, and the idea of an Anglican Communion brought to

its adherents a special sense of connection with the mother country and its institutions.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, members of religious minorities were almost everywhere inclined toward Loyalism, while adherents of the dominant local denomination were most often patriots.<sup>31</sup>

The first Anglican Church in Connecticut was built at Stratford in 1724. The conversion to Anglicanism of Timothy Cutler and several of his colleagues on the Yale faculty touched off a bitter pamphlet war with the Congregationalists in the 1720's.<sup>32</sup> The Anglicans were particularly vociferous in their demand that the Established Church of the mother country should have "at least equal privileges with any other denomination in an English colony" and they criticized the political and religious organizations of the Puritan colonies as dangerously "republican" and "democratic."<sup>33</sup>

Thanks to the zealous missionary work of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel,<sup>34</sup> Anglicans constituted "a significant proportion" of several Fairfield County towns by the early 1760's. In 1774, the Rev. Elizur Goodrich estimated that one out of every thirteen persons in Connecticut was an Anglican, with the proportion rising as high as one out of three in Fairfield County. In the town of Newtown, the population was evenly divided, "1084 in either case."<sup>35</sup> Although the S.P.G. missionaries of Norwalk and Newtown reported that where the Anglican Church was strong "rebellious outrages" during the Stamp Act crisis, were few or non-existent,<sup>36</sup> we must still conclude with Wallace Brown that:

The evidence is strong that most Anglicans were simply neutralists . . . who strongly disliked the Revolution but were eventually reconciled to it.<sup>37</sup>

Anglicanism was not really a cause, but rather a





symptom of strong Loyalist sentiment in Fairfield County.<sup>38</sup>

Lawrence Henry Gipson, in Jared Ingersoll: A Study in American Loyalism . . ., aptly compared the "frenzy" and "mental wave of high tension" of the Great Awakening with the controversy in Connecticut surrounding the passage of the Stamp Act.<sup>39</sup> The similarity extends even further, however, for many of the participants on both sides were the same. As Benjamin Gale, deputy from Killingsworth and spokesman for the Old Light party, noted:

The ms. I mentioned to you is an historical Acct. of the several Factions wh. have subsisted in this Colony, originating with the New London Society--thence metamorphosed into the faction for paper Emissions on Loan, then into N. Light, into ye Susquehanna and Delaware Factions---into Orthodoxy---now into Stamp Duty---the Actors the same, each change drawing in some new members.<sup>40</sup>

Gale's manuscript has provided the starting point for every major modern interpretation of eighteenth century Connecticut history.<sup>41</sup>

A significant number of the Loyalists who upheld the power of the Crown during the Stamp Act furor did so not because of principle or hope of preferment, but rather because of expediency and a general preference for the status quo. They were anxious to preserve Connecticut's unique privileges and independent position under its charter from Charles II and they rightly feared that any deviation from the straight and narrow would provoke its revocation. Indeed, the tenuous position of the Charter became the "chief lever" of the conservative faction in pre-Revolutionary Connecticut politics. This group of reluctant Tories included such men as Governor

Thomas Fitch of Norwalk; Jared Ingersoll, a New Haven lawyer and the newly appointed Stamp Collector; William Samuel Johnson; and William Herron, conservative deputy to the General Assembly from Redding.<sup>42</sup>

Governor Fitch himself had played an important role in efforts to persuade Parliament against the Stamp Act, but once it had been enacted he felt duty-bound to enforce the odious law. Fitch first incurred popular dissatisfaction by urging the General Assembly to prosecute the leaders of a mob which had confronted Ingersoll at Wethersfield on September 19, 1765 and had demanded his resignation. When Fitch took the governor's oath required by the Act and swore to uphold its provisions, all the members of the Governor's Council from eastern Connecticut walked out. Fitch and the juring Assistants were immediately made the prime targets of New Light-mercantile opposition; all were ousted in the election of 1766, and Deputy-Governor William Pitkin was elected in Fitch's place.<sup>43</sup>

A tumultuous controversy surrounded this election. During the election the main support for Fitch and the juring councilors had come from the western counties. Radical mob action had been kept to a minimum there; only the towns of Stratford and Milford had formed Sons of Liberty organizations.<sup>44</sup> Seven prominent Anglican clergymen from western Connecticut anxiously sent a letter to the secretary of the S.P.G., disassociating themselves from anti-Stamp Act Violence.<sup>45</sup>

Connecticut's conservative faction tried repeatedly throughout the period 1766-1770 to return Fitch and his fellow councilors to office, but without success. When Fitch ran again in 1767, Benjamin Gale wrote to Ezra Stiles:





After all our paper War, Squibs, Curses, Rhimes, etc. I am not yet satisfied Govr. Fitch will be chosen, however, he has a large majority on ye west side C[onnecticut] River.<sup>46</sup>

Many observers began to feel that Fitch's repeated defeats at the polls were evidence that the more wealthy and populous western towns were under-represented in the government. 'Plain Truth' wrote several articles in February 1767 for the Connecticut Gazette which showed that the forty-two towns west of the River paid a million pounds in taxes while the twenty-eight eastern towns paid less than \$565 thousand, yet westerners held only seven of the major magistracies and the easterners had twelve;

God knows we have distinctions enough already --- Calvinism and Arminianism have for several years lost their theological meaning and have been used mostly in a political sense. . . . But if in addition to this the Great River is to be the boundary of two contending parties, we shall be in a situation more deplorable.<sup>47</sup>

The Stamp Act crisis had driven a further wedge between the people or eastern and western Connecticut.

Historical opinion is almost unanimous that the election of 1766 "was the greatest political upheaval the colony had ever experienced."<sup>48</sup> According to Edmund S. Morgan, the Stamp Act controversy acted as a catalyst to crystallize both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary attitudes. Revolutionary crisis in Connecticut,

such as it was, passed a decade earlier at the time of the Stamp Act, when the potentially Loyalist element was purged. During the years 1774-76, when most other councils were being entirely replaced, all the Assistants were regularly reelected, except Anglican William Samuel Johnson.<sup>50</sup>

After the election of 1766, both central and local political leadership, with the exception of Fairfield County, remained solidly Whig.<sup>51</sup>

Almost simultaneously with the Stamp Act crisis, Connecticut was becoming embroiled in another heated controversy over its claims to lands west of the Hudson River. The Susquehanna Company was formed in July 1753 in the town of Windham for the express purpose of colonizing western lands in the Wyoming Valley area; the list of its members included some of the wealthiest and most influential figures in eastern Connecticut. The demand for western lands was motivated by increasing population pressure, the general unprofitability of agriculture in a region devoid of adequate systems of either land or water transport, and a desire for quick speculative profit in rising land values.<sup>52</sup>

The members of the pro-Susquehanna faction were willing to risk conflict with Pennsylvania (who also claimed the Wyoming Valley) and face possible revocation of the Charter. Governor Thomas Fitch and Colony Agent William Samuel Johnson, however, opposed this as a dangerous course of action.<sup>53</sup> The first sign of a "moderate radical take over" within the government was the election of Eliphalet Dyer, a proprietor of the Company, to the Governor's Council in 1762.<sup>54</sup> The Susquehanna party took advantage



of the political tumult of the election of 1766 to place Jonathan Trumbull, a prominent eastern Connecticut merchant and proprietor of the Company, as Deputy-Governor.<sup>55</sup> Trumbull was elected Governor on the death of William Pitkin in 1769, and by the middle '70's the Susquehanna Company had secured the complete backing of the colony government. In 1774, the colony of Connecticut created a new township, Westmoreland, in the Wyoming River valley of the present state of Pennsylvania.

In the last years of the Susquehanna controversy, the General Assembly had received many protests and remonstrances from Fairfield County towns against the colonizing of lands west of the Hudson. Fairfield residents were key organizers in the anti-Susquehanna convention of 1774; this convention was the first of its sort in Connecticut and was condemned by many as a further step toward factionalism.<sup>56</sup> On April 5, 1774, Philanthropus Redivivus reminded the readers of the Connecticut Courant that,

Our present freedom from the Stamp Act . . . was owing very much to the vigorous, intrepid actions of the wise men of the east in our colony, and not to the mean mercenary conduct of a number of courtiers, that appeared ready and willing to resign all our natural rights and charter privileges, under the vain and groundless pretence of saving our charter, though truly for the sake of some petty post, money or honor that comes from home. Upon examination you'll find, perhaps, the same men and their tools as willing to give away part of our colony, as they were rights and privileges then.<sup>57</sup>

The intensification of rhetoric reflected in Philanthropus's letter serves as an adequate gauge of the heightening of political tensions in Connecticut during the first twenty years of the Susquehanna Company's existence.

Fairfield County towns were only reluctant participants in the Continental Association and the non-consumption agreements of 1774. There was general dissatisfaction throughout the county with the rise of prices during the first months of the suspension of trade with Great Britain. Gradually, however, Whigs gained political control in the larger coastal towns; in October 1774, the residents of Stamford declared, "Notwithstanding our long silence, we are by no means unwilling to join with our sister towns to assert our just rights." Similar resolutions followed soon afterwards from the town meetings of Greenwich and Norwalk. In December 1774, Stratford, Fairfield and Redding appointed Committees of Inspection to enforce the articles of the Association. At this time, William Williams, a leading Whig, noted with obvious satisfaction, "Finally the Scales begin to fall from the eyes of our western brethren."<sup>58</sup>

Smouldering Tory resentment in Fairfield County broke out into open opposition in the early months of 1775. A town meeting of Ridgefield rejected the Association with only three dissenting votes and the inhabitants of Danbury revoked the appointment of their committee of inspection. On January 13, 1775, two hundred Fairfield County Tories gathered at Ridgefield to affirm their allegiance to the King and Parliament.

The Whigs began their counter-attack in early March. A committee of the General Assembly was appointed to investigate reports that the town meetings of Ridgefield and Newtown had passed resolutions "injurious to the







to additional punishment in the form of fines or imprisonment.<sup>65</sup> Town officers were empowered to confine all suspected Tories, not only in their own jurisdictions but also in adjoining towns of the same county where Committees of Inspection had not yet been established. Persons convicted by the Superior Court of taking up arms against the United Colonies, directly or indirectly supplying British forces, or inducing others to join the "ministerial armies," forfeited their estates and were liable to up to three years imprisonment.<sup>66</sup> The forfeited estate was then to be placed in the hands of "some proper person" who would improve it for the use of the State and be accountable for its rent.<sup>67</sup>

An act of the General Assembly on June 14, 1776 further elaborated the procedures for the seizure of Loyalist property.<sup>68</sup> Under the provisions of the 1776 Act, town selectmen seized the goods and chattels of all persons serving in the Crown forces and held them until the next meeting of the county court. (Warrants had to be served at least twelve days before the court began session.) Once a warrant had been ascertained as a true bill, the Loyalist's property was declared confiscated and sold (either by auction or private sale) for the benefit of the State. The State assumed all the assets and liabilities of the Loyalist. The State collected all debts due to the absentee and paid creditors who presented claims within a reasonable length of time from the proceeds of the sale.<sup>69</sup> The mothers, wives, young children and other dependents of the Loyalist absentee were allowed to retain the use of 1/3 of the forfeited estate during their natural lifetime.<sup>70</sup> For their efforts in the disposition of the confiscated estate, the town selectmen received "reasonable compensation" as ascertained by the county court.

As the war intensified, the civil liberties of Connecticut residents were increasingly compromised by the action of the legislature. All travelers had to have passes, issued either by

Congress, a Committee of Inspection, an army officer, or a magistrate, which stated their destination and the nature of their business. The State placed embargoes on the export by water of all cattle and provisions and passes were necessary for the conduct of supplies involving more than one team of oxen.<sup>71</sup>

Popular demand for summary measures against Tories climaxed in the autumn of 1776.<sup>72</sup> The General Assembly appointed a second committee to investigate possible revolt and disaffection in the western towns; its members, Abraham Davenport, Daniel Sherman, Thomas Fitch, Andrew Adams and Joseph Bissell, had the power to confine and remove all inimical persons and were to draw upon the military support of General Wooster and the militia if necessary.<sup>73</sup> In October 1776, the General Assembly passed an act incorporating the death penalty for acts of high treason. (Included within the definition of treason were either enlisting in, recruiting for, and supplying or corresponding with British forces.) Persons providing "aid and comfort to the enemy," a purposely ambiguous phrase, were liable to ten years in prison at their own expense.<sup>74</sup>

Connecticut passed its first Test Act on November 7, 1776. All freemen, members of the General Assembly, and civil and military officers, were required to take an oath of fidelity or face disfranchisement and the loss of their privileges.<sup>75</sup> The Test Act was amended in May 1777, to require the oath of fidelity from all persons twenty-one years of age or older; the Act was amended again in October of the same year to require the oath from guardians and executors of estates. Persons charged with treason were automatically required to take the oath or face further prosecution for their alleged acts of disloyalty.<sup>76</sup>

Connecticut experimented with a proclamation of amnesty in the summer of 1777. All persons voluntarily returning from British-held areas by





August 1 were to be pardoned. Although many persons returned at that time, the political/military situation soon worsened and no further amnesty was granted until the summer of 1779.<sup>77</sup>

On October 11, 1777, the General Assembly passed yet another act concerning the sequestration of Loyalist property.<sup>78</sup> Persons who had either refused or neglected to take the oath of fidelity were not allowed to hold, purchase, or transfer real estate without a special license from the Assembly.<sup>79</sup> All those lands not owned by a "citizen," as defined above, "were to be sequestered and rented out for terms not longer than three years." The State's Attorneys had the power to recover all debts due the estate, for which they personally received 3% of all the money taken in.

The final definition of Connecticut's policy concerning confiscated estates came on May 14, 1778.<sup>80</sup> This law (1) retained the procedures of the 1776 act concerning the indictment of absentees before the county court, (2) made provisions for the speedy appraisal of the property, (3) followed the guidelines of normal escheatment proceedings concerning the absentees' assets and liabilities,<sup>81</sup> (4) assumed liability for full payment of creditor's claims even when they exceeded the total value of the confiscated estate,<sup>82</sup> and (6) established appeal procedures to the Superior Court. This law was amended only once, in May 1779, to provide for confiscations in cases of co-ownership.<sup>84</sup>

The first recorded sales of confiscated estates in the Fairfield County area date from 1781.<sup>85</sup> Although it is nowhere explicitly stated in either the acts of the General Assembly or the writings of contemporary observers, these first sales were probably a response to growing economic pressures caused by war-time inflation, which reached a high point in the years 1779-1780. New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Vermont all began active programs for the sale of confiscated prop-

at this time.<sup>87</sup>

Although scattered sales continued throughout 1781-1782, the great bulk of confiscated property was not sold until after the Treaty of Paris in 1783.<sup>88</sup> According to Article V of the Treaty, Congress "earnestly recommended" to the various states that their confiscatory policies be reversed. Confiscated estates were to be restored to all returning Loyalists who were willing to refund the purchase price paid by the present owner. Article VI of the Treaty guarded against further land confiscation and persecution of British sympathizers.<sup>89</sup> Under the government of the Articles of Confederation, however, the individual state governments were not bound by the provisions of the Treaty. News of the provisions of the Treaty of Paris occasioned, in most places, not the hoped for end to confiscations but rather a frenzy of renewed sales; each state tried to outdo the next in its efforts to dispose of confiscated property before the British government could find a more effective way to secure the provisions of the Treaty.<sup>90</sup>

Loyalist land confiscations in southwestern Connecticut never reached either the high proportions found in the nearby New York counties of Dutchess and Westchester or the more moderate levels of neighboring Massachusetts.<sup>9</sup> In Stamford, where confiscations were the heaviest, the 1,035 acres confiscated constitute only a small fraction of the total area of the present town, 24,640 acres.<sup>92</sup> Figures for total acreage confiscated are even less striking for Norwalk (only 287 acres out of 17,728) and Greenwich (544 acres out of 32,384.)<sup>93</sup>

The limited scale of confiscations in this area not only reflects Connecticut's reputed leniency with British sympathizers,<sup>94</sup> but also betrays a Loyalist population substantially smaller than previous research has suggested.





A thorough search of state and local records, using a broad definition of "Loyalism,"<sup>95</sup> yielded only 75 names of active Loyalists in Greenwich, or .087% of the male population of an age eligible for military service; 131 active Loyalists were found in Stamford (.07%) and 96 in Norwalk (.068%).<sup>96</sup> Such figures are substantially lower than Hinman's estimated Loyalist population of 6% in Fairfield County and are much closer to Brown's estimate of .08% for the entire state.<sup>97</sup>

Although Brown's estimate of the Loyalists' numerical strength appears to be extremely accurate, his characterization of them as a wealthy and commercially-oriented group is much less valid. (See Appendices A, C). An analysis of the assessed valuation of Loyalist estates in Greenwich and Stamford, the two towns for which Grand (Tax) Lists from the Revolutionary period still exist, produces a median estate for Greenwich of £48/3/10 (represented by the estate of Jehiel Partelow, a lower middle-class cordwainer) and for Stamford, a median estate of £48/0/0 (represented by the estate of Abraham Bates, a yeoman farmer). Such estates are only slightly wealthier than average for the towns considered. A random sample of the 1775 Greenwich Tax List yields a median of £38/5/0 and for the Stamford 1775 list, £42/3/0.<sup>98</sup>

The clear majority of Loyalists in the Greenwich-Stamford-Norwalk area belonged to the middle class. Employing the criteria established by Charles Grant in Democracy in the Frontier Town of Kent (a list of £30 as the lower limit of the lower middle-class, £50 for the upper middle-class and £100 for the upper class),<sup>99</sup> we find that 39 of a sample of 65 Stamford Loyalists belonged to the "middling sort." The same is true for Greenwich, where 27 out of 43 Loyalists fall into the same category.<sup>100</sup>

Yet despite the seeming evidence to the contrary, there is a shred of truth to the old myth that Loyalists were a wealthy elite. Although most Loyalists belonged to the middle-class, their numbers included in each town a few extremely wealthy men. This phenomenon can be observed by contrasting the hour-glass shaped distribution curve of the Greenwich Loyalists,

Table 1  
Greenwich Loyalists

under £30.....	11
£30-£50.....	14
£50-£70.....	7
£70-£100.....	5
£100-£130.....	1
£130-£160.....	2
over £160.....	3

with the more common pyramidal distribution of wealth among the purchasers of confiscated estates in Greenwich:

Table 2  
Purchasers of Confiscated Estates, Greenwich

under £30.....	5
£30-£50.....	5
£50-£70.....	5
£70-£100.....	2
£100-£130.....	2
£130-£160.....	1
over £160.....	1

These few wealthy Loyalists, mostly merchants and large landowners, apparently caught the popular imagination and gave Loyalists a reputation for wealth.<sup>101</sup>

The same phenomenon is, of course, responsible for the variance between the median and mean averages of Loyalist estates. A disproportionate concentration of wealth in each of



Philip Lockwood of Greenwich - average list -  
£30/17/0; approximate total cost of all purchases - £92/12/0; purchases -  
? acres confiscated from William Hendria  
of Greenwich, appraised at £54/0/0 and  
purchased by Lockwood in 1784 for £55/0/0;  
6 acres confiscated from William Peck  
of Greenwich, appraised at £110/0/0  
and purchased in 1783-84 by Lockwood for  
£37/12/0.

subsequent real estate sales - 6 acres  
sold to Jacob Lockwood in 1787 for  
£63/0/0 N.Y. money.

Stephen Newman of Stamford - approximate total  
cost of all purchases - £79/17/9; pur-  
chases - 11 acres, 1 rood, 26 rods con-  
fiscated from Josiah Blackman of Stam-  
ford, appraised at £79/17/9 and granted  
to Newman in 1782.

subsequent real estate sales - The same  
parcel was resold to Eliphalet Weed in  
1787 for £79/17/9; 8 acres sold to David  
Maltby in 1787 for £116/0/0 N.Y. money.

Joseph Lockwood of Norwalk - approximate total  
cost of all purchases - £76/15/6; purchases  
4 acres and 1/4 of the personal estate  
of the Rev. Jeremiah Leaming of Norwalk,  
purchased by Lockwood in 1781 for £22/10/6;  
7 acres confiscated from Rev. Leaming and  
purchased by Lockwood in 1781 for £54/5/0.

subsequent real estate sales - none

John Adams of Greenwich - approximate total cost  
of all purchases £50/17/0; purchases -  
1 acre confiscated from Nathaniel Adams  
of Greenwich, appraised at £6/0/0, and  
purchased by John Adams in 1781 for  
£8/1/0; 3 acres confiscated from Nathaniel  
Adams, appraised at £26/18/0, and purchase

by John Adams in 1781 for £32/16/0;  
1 rood and a house confiscated from  
Nathaniel Adams, appraised at  
£30/0/0 and purchased by John Adams  
in 1781 for £10/0/0.

subsequent real estate sales - none

Jesse Bell of Dutchess Co., N.Y. - approximate  
total cost of all purchases - £45/0/0;  
purchases - 38 acres, 2 roods, house  
and barn confiscated from Jared Bell  
of Stamford, appraised at £312/0/0,  
and purchased in 1782 for £25/0/0 lawful  
silver money and £764/5/0 state money.

subsequent real estate sales - 10 acres  
to Peter Scofield for £50/6/6; 10 acres  
to Abijah Seely for £55/6/0 N.Y. money  
in 1786; 56 acres to Silas Davenport  
for £443/5/0; 2 acres to Joseph Scofield,  
Jr. for £10/0/0 N.Y. money in 1787.

Robert Peck of Greenwich - average list - £78/2/2;  
approximate total cost of all purchases -  
£44/11/11; purchases - 17 acres confis-  
cated from Nehemiah Knapp of Greenwich  
and purchased by Peck in 1784 for £33/10/3;  
1/6 of 1- acres owned by George and Ruth  
Carpenter of Greenwich and purchased by  
Peck for £33/5/0.

subsequent real estate sales - none

Edward Wentworth of Norwalk - approximate total  
cost of all purchases - £41/14/0; purchases -  
8 acres of pasture confiscated from Rev.  
Jeremiah Leaming of Norwalk and purchased  
by Wentworth in 1783 for £39/0/0; 1/6 of  
a wharf confiscated from John White of  
Norwalk and purchased by Wentworth in  
1783 for £9/0/0 state money.

subsequent real estate sales - none





Abraham Davenport of Stamford - average list -  
£339/39/8; approximate total cost of all  
purchases - £297/15/5; purchases - 13  
acres confiscated from David Knapp of  
Greenwich, appraised at £100/0/0 and  
purchased by Davenport in 1784 for  
£33/3/0; 6 acres, 3 roods, 14 rods  
confiscated from Abraham Bates of Stam-  
ford and purchased by Davenport in  
1781 for £134/12/5 in state money;  
1 acre confiscated from Josiah Blackman  
of Stamford and purchased for £11/0/0;  
28 acres of salt meadow confiscated from  
Abraham Selleck of Stamford and purchased  
by Davenport in 1782 for £30/0/0; 18  
acres and 90 acres confiscated from  
Raymond Selleck of Stamford and purchased  
by Davenport in 1783 for £360/0/0 in  
state money and £80/0/0 in lawful silver  
money.

subsequent real estate sales - Knapp's  
13 acres were resold within three days  
of their purchase to Seth Palmer one  
of Knapp's neighbor's; Blackman's 1  
acre parcel was given to Maj. John and  
James Davenport in 1790; Selleck's 18  
acres were sold to Seth Scofield in  
1784 for £101/15/0 in N.Y. money; 48  
acres sold to Hanford Hait for £48/8/7  
in 1786; 2 acres and buildings sold to  
William Fitch for £375/0/0 in N.Y.  
money in 1784; 32 acres sold to Edmund  
and Jacob Lockwood for £192/0/0 in 1784;  
26 acres, 2 roods, 18 rods sold to  
Thaddeus Husted for £212/18/0 N.Y.  
money in 1784.

First Society of Norwalk - approximate total  
value of all grants - £252/18/0; grants-  
1/2 of a house, cider mill and shop con-  
fiscated from Nathan and Sarah Bears of  
Norwalk appraised at £14/6/0; 11 acres,

3 roods in Canaan Society confiscated  
from John Betts of Norwalk appraised  
at £47/0/0; 1 acre, 39 roods confis-  
cated from Henry, Nehemiah and Moses  
Rogers of Norwalk appraised at £6/12/6;  
38 acres in Canaan Society confiscated  
from William Wheaton of Norwalk at  
£80/0/0; 1/4 of a wharf and lot con-  
fiscated from John White of Norwalk  
appraised at £5/0/0; 1/2 of a house,  
barn and 20 acres confiscated from  
Uriah Wright of Norwalk appraised at  
£100/0/0; all granted to the First  
Society in 1784 in compensation for  
the burning of their meeting house by  
the British in 1779.

Col. Joseph Hait of Stamford - average list-  
£66/6/4; approximate total cost of all  
purchases - £232/16/0; purchases - 48  
acres, house and barn, together with  
an additional 8 acres, confiscated  
from Seth Seely of Stamford and pur-  
chased in 1783 for £232/16/0.

subsequent real estate sales - 46 acres  
in Newfield sold to Lewis McDonald, Esq.  
for £105/13/0 N.Y. money.

Peter Knapp of Stamford - average list - £55/12/6;  
approximate total cost of all purchases-  
£213/4/3; purchases - 14 acres, 2 roods,  
27 rods confiscated from the Hubbard  
family of Stamford and purchased by Knapp  
in 1781 for £208/19/6; 1/2 of an acre con-  
fiscated from the Hubbards and purchased  
by Knapp in 1784 for £3/14/9.

subsequent real estate sales - none

Capt. Samuel Hait, 5th of Stamford - average list-  
£8/0/0; approximate total cost of all



Tallmadge; 7 acres purchased by Jose Lockwood in 1781 for £54/5/0; 4 acres purchased by James Betts in 1781 for £22/0/0; 10 acres purchased by Maj. John Davenport and James Davenport in 1783 for £84/12/0 in state money and £1/0/0 in lawful silver money; 10 acres purchased in 1783 by his neighbor Edward Wentworth for £39/0/0.

John Ketcham, ship captain in the West India trade - joined the British in 1777 and emigrated to New Brunswick in 1783; approximate total value of all confiscated property - £500/0/0; confiscated property - 4 acres, house and garden appraised at £500/0/0.

Samuel Ketcham - joined the British in 1779 and emigrated to New Brunswick in 1783; approximate total value of all confiscated property - £110/10/0; confiscated property - furniture appraised at £50/0/0; a cow and swine appraised at £6/10/0; a horse appraised at £15/0/0; hats and boots appraised at £30/0/0.

Uriah Wright - approximate total value of all confiscated property - £100/0/0; confiscated property - 1/2 of 20 acres, house and barn appraised at £100/0/0 and granted in 1784 to the First Society of Norwalk.

William Wheaton - 1775 list - £0/19/8; approximate total value of all confiscated property - £80/0/0; confiscated property - 38 acres in Canaan Society appraised at £80/0/0 and granted in 1784 to the First Society of Norwalk.

John Betts - approximate total value of all confiscated property - £47/0/0; confiscated

property - 11 acres, 3 roods in Canaan Society appraised at £47/0/0 and granted to the First Society of Norwalk in 1784.

Samuel Nash - approximate total value of all confiscated property - £40/0/0; confiscated property - 12 acres purchased by Major John Davenport and James Davenport in 1783 for £117/10/0 in state money and £2/10/0 in lawful silver money; 1/6 of a house, 1/3 of a barn, 2 acres all purchased in 1783 by Mrs. Jerusha Nash for £20/0/0.

John Banford - 1775 list - £0/13/9; approximate total value of all confiscated property - £35/0/0; confiscated property - 40 rods and a house appraised at £35/0/0 and granted to Jabez Gregory.

Samuel White - approximate total value of all confiscated property - £35/0/0; confiscated property - 1 acre near meeting house purchased by Thomas Betts in 1783 for £35/0/0.

Eleazer Street - approximate total value of all confiscated property - £28/14/1; creditor's claims - £50/2/11 (estate insolvent); confiscated property - 1 acre purchased in 1783 by James Rogers for £28/10/1 in lawful silver money and £0/19/9 in state money.

Nathan Bears, blacksmith, and his wife Sarah - 1775 list - £1/5/4; approximate total value of all confiscated property - £19/6/0; confiscated property - 1/2 of a house and blacksmith's shop and 1/2 of a cider mill appraised at £14/6/0 and granted in 1784 to the First Society of Norwalk; 1/2 of an acre appraised at £12/7/0 in state money and £0/15/0 in lawful silver money.





Abraham Davenport of Stamford - average list - £339/39/8; approximate total cost of all purchases - £297/15/5; purchases - 13 acres confiscated from David Knapp of Greenwich, appraised at £100/0/0 and purchased by Davenport in 1784 for £33/3/0; 6 acres, 3 roods, 14 rods confiscated from Abraham Bates of Stamford and purchased by Davenport in 1781 for £134/12/5 in state money; 1 acre confiscated from Josiah Blackman of Stamford and purchased for £11/0/0; 28 acres of salt meadow confiscated from Abraham Selleck of Stamford and purchased by Davenport in 1782 for £30/0/0; 18 acres and 90 acres confiscated from Raymond Selleck of Stamford and purchased by Davenport in 1783 for £360/0/0 in state money and £80/0/0 in lawful silver money.

subsequent real estate sales - Knapp's 13 acres were resold within three days of their purchase to Seth Palmer one of Knapp's neighbor's; Blackman's 1 acre parcel was given to Maj. John and James Davenport in 1790; Selleck's 18 acres were sold to Seth Scofield in 1784 for £101/15/0 in N.Y. money; 48 acres sold to Hanford Hait for £48/8/7 in 1786; 2 acres and buildings sold to William Fitch for £375/0/0 in N.Y. money in 1784; 32 acres sold to Edmund and Jacob Lockwood for £192/0/0 in 1784; 26 acres, 2 roods, 18 rods sold to Thaddeus Huested for £212/18/0 N.Y. money in 1784.

First Society of Norwalk - approximate total value of all grants - £252/18/0; grants - 1/2 of a house, cider mill and shop confiscated from Nathan and Sarah Bears of Norwalk appraised at £14/6/0; 11 acres,

3 roods in Canaan Society confiscated from John Betts of Norwalk appraised at £47/0/0; 1 acre, 39 roods confiscated from Henry, Nehemiah and Moses Rogers of Norwalk appraised at £6/12/6; 38 acres in Canaan Society confiscated from William Wheaton of Norwalk at £80/0/0; 1/4 of a wharf and lot confiscated from John White of Norwalk appraised at £5/0/0; 1/2 of a house, barn and 20 acres confiscated from Uriah Wright of Norwalk appraised at £100/0/0; all granted to the First Society in 1784 in compensation for the burning of their meeting house by the British in 1779.

Col. Joseph Hait of Stamford - average list - £66/6/4; approximate total cost of all purchases - £232/16/0; purchases - 48 acres, house and barn, together with an additional 8 acres, confiscated from Seth Seely of Stamford and purchased in 1783 for £232/16/0.

subsequent real estate sales - 46 acres in Newfield sold to Lewis McDonald, Esq. for £105/13/0 N.Y. money.

Peter Knapp of Stamford - average list - £55/12/6; approximate total cost of all purchases - £213/4/3; purchases - 14 acres, 2 roods, 27 rods confiscated from the Hubbard family of Stamford and purchased by Knapp in 1781 for £208/19/6; 1/2 of an acre confiscated from the Hubbards and purchased by Knapp in 1784 for £3/14/9.

subsequent real estate sales - none

Capt. Samuel Hait, 5th of Stamford - average list - £8/0/0; approximate total cost of all



Philip Lockwood of Greenwich - average list - £30/17/0; approximate total cost of all purchases - £92/12/0; purchases - ? acres confiscated from William Hendria of Greenwich, appraised at £54/0/0 and purchased by Lockwood in 1784 for £55/0/0; 6 acres confiscated from William Peck of Greenwich, appraised at £110/0/0 and purchased in 1783-84 by Lockwood for £37/12/0.

subsequent real estate sales - 6 acres sold to Jacob Lockwood in 1787 for £63/0/0 N.Y. money.

Stephen Newman of Stamford - approximate total cost of all purchases - £79/17/9; purchases - 11 acres, 1 rood, 26 rods confiscated from Josiah Blackman of Stamford, appraised at £79/17/9 and granted to Newman in 1782.

subsequent real estate sales - The same parcel was resold to Eliphalet Weed in 1787 for £79/17/9; 8 acres sold to David Maltby in 1787 for £116/0/0 N.Y. money.

Joseph Lockwood of Norwalk - approximate total cost of all purchases - £76/15/6; purchases - 4 acres and 1/4 of the personal estate of the Rev. Jeremiah Leaming of Norwalk, purchased by Lockwood in 1781 for £22/10/6; 7 acres confiscated from Rev. Leaming and purchased by Lockwood in 1781 for £54/5/0.

subsequent real estate sales - none

John Adams of Greenwich - approximate total cost of all purchases £50/17/0; purchases - 1 acre confiscated from Nathaniel Adams of Greenwich, appraised at £6/0/0, and purchased by John Adams in 1781 for £8/1/0; 3 acres confiscated from Nathaniel Adams, appraised at £26/18/0, and purchased

by John Adams in 1781 for £32/16/0; 1 rood and a house confiscated from Nathaniel Adams, appraised at £30/0/0 and purchased by John Adams in 1781 for £10/0/0.

subsequent real estate sales - none

Jesse Bell of Dutchess Co., N.Y. - approximate total cost of all purchases - £45/0/0; purchases - 38 acres, 2 rods, house and barn confiscated from Jared Bell of Stamford, appraised at £312/0/0, and purchased in 1782 for £25/0/0 lawful silver money and £764/5/0 state money.

subsequent real estate sales - 10 acres to Peter Scofield for £50/6/6; 10 acres to Abijah Seely for £55/6/0 N.Y. money in 1786; 56 acres to Silas Davenport for £443/5/0; 2 acres to Joseph Scofield, Jr. for £10/0/0 N.Y. money in 1787.

Robert Peck of Greenwich - average list - £78/2/2; approximate total cost of all purchases - £44/11/11; purchases - 17 acres confiscated from Nehemiah Knapp of Greenwich and purchased by Peck in 1784 for £33/10/3; 1/6 of 1- acres owned by George and Ruth Carpenter of Greenwich and purchased by Peck for £33/5/0.

subsequent real estate sales - none

Edward Wentworth of Norwalk - approximate total cost of all purchases - £41/14/0; purchases - 8 acres of pasture confiscated from Rev. Jeremiah Leaming of Norwalk and purchased by Wentworth in 1783 for £39/0/0; 1/6 of a wharf confiscated from John White of Norwalk and purchased by Wentworth in 1783 for £9/0/0 state money.

subsequent real estate sales - none





## APPENDIX E

## NORWALK TREASURER'S REQUEST FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF THE TAXES OF ABSENTEE LOYALISTS

## STATE ARCHIVES: REVOLUTIONARY WAR FIRST SERIES, VOL. XXXIV

Name	4d. State Tax 1775	2d. Town Tax 1776	12d. State Tax Nov. 1777	12d. State Tax Dec. 1777
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Thomas Atwick	£0/6/6	£0/3/3	£0/19/6	£0/19/6
Nathan Bears Jr.	1/5/4	0/6/10 1/2	2/1/3	
John Banford	0/13/9			
Jedidiah Fairweather	0/12/1	0/7/8	5/6/4	
John Finch Jr.	0/10/0	0/5/4 1/4	1/12/3	
Stephen Hoyt	0/16/9	0/5/ 1/4	1/10/3	
Joseph Hanford	0/0/10			
Benjamin Jarvis	0/10/0	1/6/3	7/17/7	
James Ketcham	0/0/4	0/0/1	0/0/6	
John Pickett	0/9/5	0/16/9	5/0/4 1/2	
Silas Raymond	0/16/11	0/8/4 1/2	2/10/3 1/2	
Samuel Rogers	0/7/2	0/7/4	2/4/0	

Name	4d. State Tax 1775	2d. Town Tax 1776	12d. State Tax Nov. 1777	12d. State Tax Dec. 1777
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Eleazer Taylor	£0/8/4	£0/4/11	£1/9/6	
Edmund Warren Jr.	0/8/0	0/3/4	1/0/0	
Thacher Sears	0/1/1	0/14/2	4/5/0	
Zophar Nash	0/18/10	0/10/3	3/1/4	
Job Burlock	0/15/8	0/8/6	2/10/9	
William Wheaton	0/19/8		2/14/1	£2/14/1
Samuel Nash		0/3/8	1/2/0	1/2/0
Samuel Olmsted		0/6/7	1/19/6 1/2	1/19/6 1/2
John McKee			0/10/ 1/2	0/10/ 1/2
Jesse Hoyt	0/12/2	0/6/2 1/4	1/17/1	1/17/1
Uriah Wright		0/3/1	0/18/7	0/18/7
Caleb Lobdall	0/6/6			
Gersham Lockwood	0/7/10			

N.B. An estate with a total assessed valuation of £30 in the 4d. 1775 State Tax column is represented by a tax of 10s., a £50 estate would be 16s. 8d., and a £100 estate would be £1/3/4. Likewise, a £30 estate in the 1776 2d. Town Tax column would be 5s., a £50 estate would be 8s. 4d., and a



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Name	4d. State Tax 1775	2d. Town Tax 1776	12d. State Tax Nov. 1777	12d. State Tax Dec. 1777
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Thomas Atwick	£0/6/6	£0/3/3	£0/19/6	£0/19/6
✓ Nathan Bears Jr.	1/5/4	0/6/10 1/2	2/1/3	
John Banford	0/13/9			
Jedidiah Fairweather	0/12/1	0/7/8	5/6/4	
-72- ✓ John Finch Jr.	0/10/0	0/5/4 1/4	1/12/3	
Stephen Hoyt	0/16/9	0/5/ 1/4	1/10/3	
✓ Joseph Hanford	0/0/10			
Benjamin Jarvis	0/10/0	1/6/3	7/17/7	
James Ketcham	0/0/4	0/0/1	0/0/6	
John Pickett	0/9/5	0/16/9	5/0/4 1/2	
Silas Raymond	0/16/11	0/8/4 1/2	2/10/3 1/2	
Samuel Rogers	0/7/2	0/7/4	2/4/0	

Name	4d. State Tax 1775	2d. Town Tax 1776	12d. State Tax Nov. 1777	12d. State Tax Dec. 1777
✓ Eleazer Taylor	£0/8/4	£0/4/11	£1/9/6	
Edmund Warren Jr.	0/8/0	0/3/4	1/0/0	
✓ Thacher Sears	0/1/1	0/14/2	4/5/0	
Zophar Nash	0/18/10	0/10/3	3/1/4	
✓ Job Burlock	0/15/8	0/8/6	2/10/9	
William Wheaton	0/19/8		2/14/1	£2/14/1
✓ Samuel Nash		0/3/8	1/2/0	1/2/0
-73- ✓ Samuel Olmsted		0/6/7	1/19/6 1/2	1/19/6 1/2
John McKee			0/10/ 1/2	0/10/ 1/2
✓ Jesse Hoyt	0/12/2	0/6/2 1/4	1/17/1	1/17/1
Uriah Wright		0/3/1	0/18/7	0/18/7
Caleb Lobdall	0/6/6			
Gersham Lockwood	0/7/10			

N.B. An estate with a total assessed valuation of £30 in the 4d. 1775 State Tax column is represented by a tax of 10s., a £50 estate would be 16s. 8d., and a £100 estate would be £1/3/4. Likewise, a £30 estate in the 1776 2d. Town Tax column would be 5s., a £50 estate would be 8s. 4d., and a





Searching in the following locations should uncover helpful material:

1. Much data on the Loyalists who went to New York can be found in the Carleton Papers at Williamsburg. These have been microfilmed.
  2. The Loyal American Legion Muster Rolls are in Ottawa, Canada.
  3. The Dominion Archivist, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa 3, Ontario, Canada will supply a copy of any claim made by a United Empire Loyalist who applied for land because of his services. Second Report of the Bureau of Archives for the Province of Ontario, by Alexander Fraser, 1904 contains many claims.
  4. The Public Archives of Nova Scotia at Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.
  5. The New Brunswick Museum, History and Manuscript Division at St. John, New Brunswick, Canada.
  6. All church records prior to about 1815 are "reposited" with The Secretary, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, London, England.
  7. The New York City Public Library also has copies of United Empire Loyalist "Memorials".
- The "Memorial" of Sylvanus Waterbury should be of interest and will serve as an example of the type of material available. He was the youngest surviving son of John and Susannah (Newkirk) Waterbury (TAG 27 p.250-1) and thus the youngest brother of General David Waterbury. He was a member of St. John's Episcopal Church in Stamford, Ct., where his children were baptized, and Master of Union Lodge of the Masonic Order, which met in Knapp's Tavern in Greenwich, Connecticut. Peter Cooke Waterbury, his son, who was baptized 5 Aug. 1760, was also a U.E. Loyalist. Abraham Bates, his attorney and brother-in-law, was also a Loyalist whose property was confiscated but who did not go to Canada. On the 10 Nov. 1761, Abraham married Mary Waterbury, the sister of General David and Sylvanus. Mary and Abraham Bates remained in New York City. The "Memorial" consists of four documents which will be reprinted after the final part of this report.
8. Finally: it was recently learned that Canadian census records, wills and cemetery records may be available on microfilm through inter-library loan.



NOTES AND SOURCES: CONNECTICUT  
LOYALISTS WHO WENT TO CANADA

by

Virginia H. Olson, S.G.S. Genealogist

Part I

It is hoped the information given here will help readers and members of the Stamford Genealogical Society to locate an elusive ancestor. A few Revolutionary Soldiers' names were discovered on the lists of Loyalists given in vols. 33-40 of the New York G. & B. Record (see below). A Canadian book, The Loyalists of New Brunswick by Esther Clark Wright contains a list in which many more Connecticut names were found. From Mrs. Wright's book, we have condensed the following interesting items.

About 200 Loyalists are known to have returned from Canada after the Revolution. They were very often one or two members of a large family group, the rest of whom had remained loyal and stayed at home in the new United States. Frequently, these Loyalists were deliberately omitted from family records (p. 212). Usually there was communication between the separated family members and some even sent children back to relatives where educational facilities were better.

As new settlements were being established to the west of the original colonies, the experience gained by the New Brunswick pioneers proved most valuable. Migratory movements were formed, designated as Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin or California "fevers". While a core of a family usually remained behind, many moved on. - thus New Brunswick has been designated as "a notable nursery for men and women" who pushed out in every direction, and often back into the United States (p. 226).

Some of the Loyalists whose names are best known appear on the two lists of confiscated estates in the Stamford Probate Records vol. I, p. 102, 7 Oct. 1778; For Stamford:

Bates, Abraham  
Bell, Isaac and Jared  
Blackman, Josiah  
Dibble, Fyler  
Hubbard, Isaac, Nathaniel and William  
Jarvis, Munson  
Loder, Jacob  
Picket, David  
Rogers, James  
St. John, Abraham  
Selleck, Abraham  
Waterbury, Sylvanus  
Wooster, Ebenezer





The list for Greenwich also vol. I p. 101, 7 May 1779:

Austin, Samuel  
Brush, Shubal  
Carpenter, George, Ruth and Daniel  
Galpin, Joseph  
Lockwood, Jonathan  
Lyon, Stephen  
Merritt, Daniel  
Parot (Perrot), John  
Partelo, Jehiel and Matthew  
Peck, William  
Whelpley, Darling

The list for Norwalk appears in the Land Records under the date of 20 April 1781:

Belden, Hezekiah and John  
Bolt, David and William  
Burwell, Nathan J.  
Church, Ebenezer  
Fairweather, Thomas  
Fillow, James  
Fitch, John and Nathan  
Gregory, Nathan  
Hanford, Thomas  
Hoyt, Gould  
Jarvis, Nathan  
Lambert, David  
Nash, Edward  
Olmstead, Garner  
Patrick, Richard  
Raymond, Gershom  
Sanders, John, Jr.  
Scribner, Philip  
White, Peter  
Whitney, Abraham and Hezekiah, 2nd.  
Wright, Obadiah

The persons listed are stated as being of Connecticut.

Two unusual names which appear on the Revolutionary Soldier Project list are Austin Smith and White Raymond. There is a service record for both of them. Capt. Austin Smith died in Stamford. It might be Austin, Jr. who received honorable mention for his service but who turned up as a Loyalist in the County of Annapolis, Canada and who died in Oswego, N.Y. in 1846. Or could the name really be turned around, and Smith Austin have been meant? White Raymond has a service record but nothing more. Was he the same man from Darien, Connecticut who appeared in New Brunswick as an innkeeper?

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and techniques used to collect and analyze data. It includes a detailed description of the experimental procedures and the statistical analysis performed.

3. The third part of the document presents the results of the study. It includes a series of tables and graphs that illustrate the findings of the research. The data shows a clear trend of increasing activity over time.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the implications of the findings. It suggests that the results have significant implications for the field of study and may lead to further research in this area.

5. The fifth part of the document concludes the study. It summarizes the main findings and provides a final statement on the importance of the research.

The following is a combined listing from the New York G. & B. Record volumes 33-40 (designated (1) and The Loyalists of New Brunswick (designated (2)). An asterisk identifies a name similar to that of a Revolutionary Soldier. The dates, places of origin, "gentleman 85" meaning a freeman on the list in 1785, and a few occupations which appear will be given.

A handwritten transcript of 704 pages is on file at the New York Public Library: "CL#" refers to this.

The list of names of those persons whose Real Estate was ordered to be leased out for the use and benefit of this State by the Fairfield County Court, from "Revolutionary War (RE) 1st Series" vol. 34 p. 459, will be coded by Towns: St.=Stamford; Nwlk = Norwalk; Gr.= Greenwich; Rfd = Ridgefield; N.FF = New Fairfield; N.Mil. = New Milford; F.F.= Fairfield; Rdd = Redding; Dby = Danbury; N.T. = Newtown; Str. = Stratford. These communities are all in Fairfield County. This is not a list of confiscated property.

List of Names of Connecticut Loyalists Who Went to Canada

Jabez Adams (2)  
James Adams (2)  
John\* Adams (2)  
Jonathan Adams (2)  
Benjamin Anderson (2)  
Rev. Samuel Andrews, Episcopal Minister (1) (2)

Zwiri Armstrong (2)  
Benedict Arnold (2)  
Oliver Arnold, Episcopal Minister, graduate of Yale 1776  
(1) (2)  
Rosewell Arnold (2)  
Thomas Atwick (RE Nwlk)  
Samuel Austin, tailor (2) (RE Gr)

Daniel Babbitt, blacksmith (2)  
John Banford (RE Nwlk)  
David Barnum (RE Dby)  
Nathan Barnum (2) New Fairfield (RE NFF)  
Abraham Bates (RE St)  
Nathaniel Bates (1)

Walter Bates, shoemaker (Stamford) (1) (2)  
d. 11 Feb. 1842 age 82. Wife Abigail d. 8 July 1820 age 58  
William Bates (2)  
Simon Baxter (2)  
Abel Beardsley (2)  
Rev. John Beardsley (2)  
Zephaniah Beardsley (2) Stratford (CL# 411)  
Samuel Beebe (2)





Nathan Beers, Jr. (RE Nwlk)  
 Isaac\* Bell, Sr., merchant (1)(2) Stamford (CL#109)  
 (RE St)  
 Isaac Bell, Jr., gentleman (2)  
 James Bell, 2 Lt. Co. 23 (1) (2)  
 Jared Bell, Stamford (CL# 613) (RE St)  
 Comfort Benedict (2) Danbury (CL# 55)  
 Lt. Eli Benedict (1)(2) Danbury (CL#473)  
 Hezekiah Benedict (RE Dby)  
 Josiah Benedict (CL# 471) (RE Dby)  
  
 Everit Birdsay (RE St)  
 Jonathan \* Bishop (1)  
 Silvanus Bishop (2) Litchfield (CL# 563)  
 Andrew Blackman (2) (RE Nt)  
 Josiah Blackman (RE St)  
 Asa Blakeslee, soap boiler (2)  
  
 Isaac Bonnell (or Bunnel) (2)  
 Joseph Booth, farmer (2)  
 Amos Botsford (1) (2) Yale "63 Newtown & New Haven  
 b. 30 Jan. 1744 d. 14 Sept. 1812 (CL#77)  
 William Briggs (2)  
 Elias Bristol (RE Nt)  
 Bostwick Brown (2)  
  
 Daniel Brown (2)  
 John\* Brown (1)  
 Josiah Sawyer Brown (2)  
 Rachel Brown, widow of Capt. Hezekiah (2)  
 Charles Brundage (RE Gr)  
 Hester Burlock, widow (2)  
 Job Burlock (RE Nwlk)  
 Thomas Burlock (RE Nwlk)  
  
 Joseph Burr (RE Rdd)  
 Benjamin Burt, Sr. (2)  
 Benjamin Burt, Jr. (2)  
 David Burt (2) Ridgefield (CL# 571) (RE Rfd)  
 Joseph Burt (2)  
 Joshua Burt (RE Rfd)  
 Rebecca Burt, Litchfield (CL# 577)  
 Theophilus Burt (RE Rfd)  
 Josiah Butler, mariner (2) 1785  
  
 Ann Cable, widow of John (2)  
 Anthony Cable, cooper (2) 1785  
 Daniel Cable (1)  
 David Cable (1)  
 Denbo Cable (1)  
 Jabez Cable (1) (2)



James Cable, cooper (1) (2) Glastonbury (CL# 593) 1795  
John Cable, cooper (1) (2) 1795  
Nicholas Calaham (2)  
Abiather Camp, Sr., Capt. Co. 18 (1) (2) New Haven (CL# 17)  
Abiather Camp, Jr., Lt. Co. 18 (1) (2)  
Eldad Camp (1)  
Hiel Camp (2) Woodbury (CL# 231)  
John Camp, 2nd Lt. Co. 18 (2)  
John Camp, Jr. (2)  
Samuel Camp (RE Nt)

Abraham Carrington, Milford (1)  
Tamar Carrington, widow of Abraham (2)  
Thomas Chapman (RE Str)  
Joshua Chandler, New Haven (1)  
Thomas Chandler, New Haven (1)  
William Chandler, New Haven (1)  
William Charles (2)  
Rachel Chichester (2)  
Asa Church (RE Dby)

Capt. Joseph Clark, Capt. Co. 9 Stratford, M.D. (CL# 399)  
d. March 1813 (1) (2) aged 79 (RE Str)  
Joseph Clark, Jr. Stratford (1) (2)  
Nehemiah Clarke, Hartford (CL# 387)  
Rev. Richard Samuel Clarke, Episcopal Minister, New Milford  
19 yrs. (1) (2)  
Rebecca Clark, wife of above (1)  
Mary Ann Clark, dau. of above (1)  
John Conry (2)  
Jedidiah Cook (2) New Haven (CL# 357)  
William Cook (2)

Amasa Coy d. 1838 age 81 (1)  
John Crawford (2)  
William Crawford, Sr., yeoman (2) 1785  
William Crawford, Jr., cooper (2) 1785  
Abel Crofoot (RE Nt)  
Elihu Cro(w)foot (2)  
Daniel Crofoot (RE Nt)  
John Crofoot (RE Nt)

John Dan, mariner (2) 1785  
Selleck Dan (2)  
James Davis (2)  
Joseph Davis (2)  
Joseph Davis (RE Ff)  
John Dean, laborer (2) 1790 (RE Dby)  
Edward Deforest, Jr. (RE Dby)  
Ephraim Deforest, shoemaker, Redding (1) (2) (CL# 275)





September

Rev. Frederick Dibble, 2nd Lt. Co. 9 Stamford (1) (2)  
 Fyler Dibble, attorney, Stamford (1) (2)  
 Jonathan Dibble (1) (2)  
 Polly Dibble, Stamford (1)  
 Ralph Dibble, Stamford d. 1799 (1) (2)  
 Walter Dibble, Stamford (2)  
 William Dibble, Stamford (1) (2)

Joseph Dickson, Fairfield (CL# 427)  
 Abraham Dickerman, shoemaker (2)  
 Isaac Drew (RE Rdd)  
 William Durfee (2)  
 Abraham Dykeman (1)  
 Joseph Dykeman (1)

Abel Fairchild (2)  
 Gershom Fairchild, carpenter (2)  
 Jedediah Fairweather, mason, (2) (RE Nwlk)  
 Thomas Fairweather (2) Norwalk (CL# 321)  
 Joseph Farris (Ferris) (2) (1) joiner Stamford  
 d. 1836 age 92  
 Joseph Ferris (RE Nt)  
 Solomon Farris, Lt. Co. 2 (2)  
 Benjamin Ferry (RE Dby)  
 Elias Foster, Sr. (2)  
 Elias Foster, Jr. (2)  
 Stephen Fountain, blacksmith, Stamford (1) (2)

John Fowler, farmer (2)  
 Nathan Frink (2)  
 William Frost (2)  
 Joseph Galpin (RE Gr)  
 Elias Glover, farmer (2)  
 George Gordon (1)  
 John Gordon, farmer (2)

John Gor(e)ham (Gorum), weaver (2) 1785  
 Jonathan Gorham (2)  
 Joseph Gorham, carpenter (2) 1790 (RE St)  
 Nathaniel Gorham, Capt. Co. 2 (2)  
 James Gray, Sr. (2) (RE Rdd)  
 James Gray, Jr. (2)  
 James Green (2) (RE Gr)  
 Robert Griffith (2)  
 Peter Guyer (Guire) (2) Fairfield (CL# 271) (RE Ff)

(Hait, Hayt or Hoyt)  
 Isaac Hoyt (RE Dby)  
 Isaac Hoyt, Jr. (RE Dby)  
 Israel Hait (Hoyt or Hayt), shoemaker, Fairfield, Norwalk  
 (1) (2) (CL# 349)  
 James Hait, auctioneer (1) (2) 1785 Fairfield  
 James Hait (1) (2) Fairfield (One James Hoyt d. 1804 Newfield,  
 James Hait, Stamford (CL#215)

*Put under Jesse - Cannot ID them for sure*



James Hoyt, Stratford (CL# 99)  
James Hoyt, Jr. (RE St)  
Jesse Hait, Jr., tailor (1) (2) (RE Nw1k)  
Jesse Hait, Jr. (2)  
Joseph \* Hait (2) Hoyt (1) Fairfield returned to U.S. ca.1800  
Munson Hoyt, Fairfield (1)

Samuel Hoyt (RE Dby)  
Stephen Hait, Esquire (1) (2) 1785 Norwalk (CL# 157) (RE Nw1k)  
Stephen Hait, Jr. (1) (2)  
Sylvanus\* Hait (2) Stamford (CL#223) (RE St)  
Abel Hall (RE Str)  
Joseph Hanford (2)  
Sarah Hanford, widow of Josiah Wheeler (CL# 329)  
Thomas Hanford, mariner (2)  
Thomas Hanford, Jr. (2)  
Thomas Hanford, merchant (2) 1785  
Thomas Hanford, gentleman (2) 1785

Israel Harding (2)  
Ebenezer Hawley (2) 1785 (RE Nt)  
Elnathan Hawley (2)  
Samuel Hawley (2)  
Reuben Hickscox (Hickok or Heacock) (2)  
Philip Hierlihy (2)  
Timothy Hierlihy, Middletown (CL# 43)  
Abraham Higgins (2)  
Jabez Hobby (2)  
Ebenezer Holly, Stamford (CL# 91)

Absolam Holmes, cordwainer (2) 1785  
Isaac Hubbard (2) (RE St)  
Nathaniel Hubbard, 2nd Lt. Co. 10 (2) (CL# 235) (RE St)  
William Hubbard (2) (RE St)  
John Hume, farmer (2)

Abijah Ingraham (2)  
Benjamin Ingraham (2)  
David Ives (2)

Peter Jackson (2)  
Benjamin James (2)  
Robert James, cordwainer (2)  
Benjamin Jarvis, Norwalk (CL# 5) (RE Nw1k)  
John Jarvis, blacksmith (1) (2) 1785  
Munson Jarvis, Esquire, (1) (2) Stamford (CL# 637) 1785  
b. 11 Oct. 1742, Norwalk, Ct., d. 7 Oct. 1825  
St. John, N.B. Mary, his wife, d. 1831 aged 78

- - to be continued - -





## HANFORD ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS

Daniel Hanford (606) was a farmer. His wife's full maiden name was Polly Fraser Brownell. In 1816, the year of his marriage, he and his father purchased a tract of land with a cabin standing on it, located in Danby, Tompkins Co., N.Y. They cleared some land and stocked the cabin with provisions against their arrival the following spring. When they returned, they found that hunters had occupied the cabin during the winter and consumed all the provisions intended to tide them over to the harvest!

James Hanford (612) d. 26 Sept. 1886, ae 84 years. He was bur. in the North Salem Cemetery, Westchester Co., N.Y.

Mary Hanford (613) was b. 2 Oct. 1805 (not 1804). She m. at North Salem on 7 Sept. 1831, Smith Bouton, b. 11 Mar. 1808 at South Salem, d. there childless 13 Oct. 1833, son of Jared and Sally (Keeler) Bouton. (W).

John Hanford (615) m. Rhoda Lucretia Paddock, who d. 9 May 1881, ae 68 y., 2 mo., 15 day., dau. of David Belden Paddock and his wife, Electa Selleck (BS).

Jacob Wallace Hanford (617) was b. in North Salem, N.Y. His wife, Betsy Whitlock, was b. 20 Jan. 1819 in Whitlocksville, N.Y., and d. 21 Oct. 1873, dau. of John Burr Whitlock and his wife, Rachel Olmstead (The Bulkeley Genealogy, by Donald Lines Jacobus). Jacob lived in Sodom, near Brewster, N.Y., moving from there in 1839 to Whitlocksville, now called Katonah. He was a cabinet maker and furniture dealer, and was for many years an undertaker, which business he sold in 1858 to Samuel B. Hoyt. Jacob then purchased the old Whitlock factory and manufactured felloes (rims) for wooden wheels. Jacob had extensive holdings of real estate. His wife was active in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

John Hanford (618). His 1st wife, Sally Lamb. d. 8 Nov. 1837, ae 31 y. 2 mo. 25 da. Mary Butts, his 2nd wife, d. 17 Nov. 1863, ae 61 y. 2 mo. 1 da. On 1 Mar. 1885, John m. (3rd), Eunice Van Valkan.

Hannah M. Hanford (620) d. 15 Aug. 1886, ae 75 y. 9 mo. 9 da.

Levi Olmstead Hanford (625). Elizabeth, his wife, was b. 9 July 1827 and d. 4 Apr. 1909. Both were bur. in the East Meredith, N.Y. Cem.

Edward Henry Hanford (631) d. 16 Mar. 1873.

Stephen Brundage Hanford (645) d. 16 May 1842. He m. Nancy Eikson, sister of John Eikson Jr., husband of Stephen's sister, Mary Jane Hanford (648). Nancy m. (2nd), the Rev. E. A. Smith. She had no children by either m.



NOTES AND SOURCES: CONNECTICUT  
LOYALISTS WHO WENT TO CANADA

by

Virginia H. Olson, S.G.S. Genealogist

Part II

List of Names of Connecticut Loyalists Who Went to Canada

(Ed. Note: See Part I, September 1974, page 21 for meaning of various codes following the names listed)

Nathaniel Jarvis, boat builder, Stamford (1) (2)  
Samuel Jarvis, Stamford (1) (2)  
Stephen Jarvis (1) (2)  
William Jarvis (2)  
Jeremiah Johns (2)  
Edward Jones (RE Rfd.)  
Chapman Judson, carpenter (2) 1785

Josiah Keeler (RE Rfd.)  
Nathan Keeler (RE Rfd.)  
Daniel Ketchum (2)  
Isaac Ketchum (2)  
James Ketchum (2) Norwalk CL #247 (RE FF)  
James Ketchum Jr. (2)  
Jedediah Ketchum (2)

John Ketchum (2) Hartford CL#417  
Jonathan Ketchum (2) Norwalk CL #305  
Samuel Ketchum (2) Norwalk CL #313  
Thomas Ketchum, cordwainer (2)  
William King (2)  
Joseph Kingsbury, Plainfield CL #691  
Jonathan Knapp, 2nd. Lt. Co. 1 (2)

Ephraim Lane, Fairfield (1) (2)  
Ebenezer Leach (RE NT)  
James Leach (2) (RE NT)  
Simeon Leach (RE NT)  
Richard Lee (2)  
George Linkletter, farmer (2)  
Abraham Lockwood (1) (2)  
Charles \* Lockwood (1) (2)  
Ephraim Lockwood (RE FF)  
George Lockwood (1) (2)  
Gershom \* Lockwood (2)  
Jabez Lockwood, son of Capt. Jabez (2)  
Joseph Lockwood (1)  
Millington Lockwood (1) (2)  
Samuel \* Lockwood, Innholder (1) (2) 1799  
Solomon Lockwood (1) (2)

*Not all identified*





Jacob \* Loder (1) (2) Stamford CL #379 (RE ST)  
 Isaac Larraway, Litchfield Co. CL#687  
 Isaac Larraway, Jr., Litchfield Co. CL #683  
 George Lumsden, shoemaker (2)  
 Daniel Lyman (1) (2)  
 Augustus Lyons (2)  
 Daniel \* Lyons (1) (2)  
 Mary Lyons (1)

## Children:

Jemima (1)  
 Ambr (1)  
 Mary (1)  
 Deborah (1)  
 Reuben (1)

John Lyon (2) Redding CL #283 (RE Rdd)  
 John Lyon Jr. Redding  
 Joseph Lyon, farmer (2) Fairfield CL#155  
 Peter Lyon (2) (RE Rdd)  
 Reuben Lyon, farmer (2) Redding  
 Stephen Lyon (RE Gr)

Matthew Mallett (RE Str)  
 Nehemiah Marks, Derby, d. July 1799 age 52 (1) (2)  
 John Marsh, farmer (2)  
 John Marvin, farmer Norwalk (1) (2)  
 Malcolm McColm, weaver (2)  
 John McKee, Norwalk CL #147 (RE Nwk)  
 Roger Merrithew (2)  
 Ezekiel Merritt (RE Gr)  
 Elijah Miles (2)  
 Samuel Miles, yeoman, Lt. Co. 1 (2) 1785 New Milford CL#123  
 Enoch Moltrup (see Northrup) (2)  
 Daniel Morehouse (2)  
 James Morehouse, carpenter (2) (RE Rfd)  
 Noah Morehouse, farmer (2)  
 Dr. Isaac Moseley, Glastonbury CL #66  
 Peter Murwin (RE FF)

Samuel Nash, farmer (2)  
 Samuel Nash Jr. (RE Nwk)  
 Zophar Nash (RE Nwk)  
 David Newman (2)  
 Silvanus Noble (2)  
 Sarah Nichols, Waterbury CL#65  
 Benajah Northrup, d. 1838 at 88, 14 children, 114 grandchildren,  
 111 Great grandchildren (1) (2)

Aaron Olstead (Olmstead?), blacksmith (2)  
 Eliphalet Olstead (2)  
 Thomas Olstead (2)  
 Samuel Olmstead (RE Nwk)  
 Thomas Osborn, New Haven CL#627



Jehiel Partelow, cordwainer, died 1831 at 87 (1) (2)  
Jehiel Partelow, Jr., d. 1837 at 66 (1)  
Matthew Partelow, tailor, brother of Jehiel Sr., died 1834 at  
87 (1) (2) (RE Gr)  
Margaret Partelow died March 13, 1819 at 65 (1)  
Richard Partelow, died 1800 at 98 (1)  
Andrew Patchen, Connecticut Fairfield Co. (2) Redding CL#297  
John Patterson (2)  
Timothy Peck, farmer (2)  
William Peck (2) (RE Gr)  
David Pickett, weaver, Stamford (1) (2) CL #363  
Children of David and Sarah Pickett of Stamford

- 1 Gould
- 2 Hannah
- 3 John Lewis
- 4 David
- 5 Sarah
- 6 Peter
- 7 Abraham Munson

John Pickett (RE Nwk)  
Nicholas Pratt (2)  
Azariah Pritchard, Derby CL #659  
Caleb Purdy (RE Gr)

Grace Raymond, Norwalk married John Marvin 9 Mar. 1787 (1)  
Hannah Raymond, Norwalk (1)  
Isaac Raymond (2)  
James Raymond (RE Nwk)  
Mary Raymond, Norwalk (1) (2), widow of Samuel of Norwalk  
and mother of Silas, died Dec. 1793 age 96  
Mary Raymond, Norwalk, sister to Silas (1)  
Mercy Raymond, Norwalk (1)  
Samuel Raymond, Norwalk (1)  
Samuel Rice Raymond, Darien, (1) (2)  
Samuel Rice Raymond, Jr. (2)  
Silas Raymond, Norwalk, died 5 June 1824 age 76 (1) (2) CL #339  
(RE Nwk)  
Stent Raymond, Darien died 1828 (1) (2) (RE Nwk)  
Thomas Raymond, Darien, died 1835 age 76 (1)  
White \* Raymond, innkeeper, Darien (1) (2) 1785  
Daniel Read (RE Rdd)  
Anthony Reese, Middletown CL#587  
Anthony Rogers (2)  
Anthony Rogers, Jr. (2)  
Elizabeth Rogers, Norwalk (2)  
Fitch Rogers, Gentleman, Norwalk CL #169 (1) (2)  
James \* Rogers (1) (2) (RE ST)  
Nehemiah Rogers (1) (2)  
Samuel Rogers (2) (RE Nwk)  
Joseph Russell (2)





Francis Sayre (2)  
 James Sayre (1) (2) Fairfield CL #479 (brother of John)  
 Rev. John Sayre, Fairfield CL#491 (1) (2)  
 John Sayre, Jr., Fairfield (1) (son of James)  
 Ezra \* Scofield, cordwainer, Sgt. 2 De L.  
 James \* Scofield  
 Jonathan Scofield (2)  
 Daniel Scovil, Waterbury (1)  
 Rev. James Scovil, Yale 1757 died 1809 (1) (2)  
 William Scovil (2)  
 Ebenezer Scribner, shoemaker (2)  
 Elias Scribner, Norwalk (1)  
 Eleazer Scribner (RE Nwk)  
 Hezekiah Scribner, Norwalk (1) (2)  
 Joseph Scribner, Norwalk (1)  
 Seth Scribner (RE Nwk)  
 Thaddeus Scribner, Norwalk (1) (2)  
 Thomas Scribner, Norwalk died 1837 aged 77 (1)  
 Thatcher Sears (RE Nwk)  
 Benjamin Seeley, Stratford, (CL# 465) (2)  
 Ebenezer Seeley, died 1833 aged 88 (1)  
 Joseph Seeley (2)  
 Justin Seeley (2)  
 Seth Seeley, farmer, Stamford (CL# 193) (1) (2)  
 Seth Seeley, Jr., Stamford died 1852 aged 85 (1)  
 Stewart Seeley died 1838 (1)  
 Abraham Selleck (RE St)  
 Raymond Selleck (RE St)  
 Thaddeus Selleck (2)  
 Ebenezer Shelton (RE Str)  
 Isaac Shelton (RE Str)  
 Isaac Sherman (RE Str)  
 Justin Sherman (RE NM)  
 Daniel Sherwood (RE Nwk)  
 Richard Sherwood (RE Rfd)  
 Jedediah Slauson, tanner (2)  
 Austin \* Smith (1)  
 Daniel \* Smith, New Milford (CL# 451)  
 Hezekiah Smith, farmer (2)  
 James \* Smith (1)  
 Jonah Smith (RE Rfd)  
 Joseph Smith (RE Rfd)  
 Samuel \* Smith (1)  
 Thomas Smith, Ridgefield (1)  
 William Smith (1)  
 Ebenezer Spicer, farmer (2)  
 Seth Squire, farmer, Stratford (CL# 621) (1) (2) Wife and  
 six children  
 Seth Squire, Jr., farmer, Stratford (1) (2)  
 Benjamin Stanton (2)  
 Benjamin Stebbins (RE Rfd)  
 Josiah Stebbins, Ridgefield (CL# 133) (2) (RE Rfd)  
 Shubal Stephens, carpenter (2)  
 Ashbel Stiles (2)  
 Ebenezer Stone (2)  
 Joshua Stone, Stamford (CL# 609) (2)  
 William Stone (2)



Amos Straight (2)  
 William Straight (2), Killingsworth  
 Samuel Street, cordwainer (2)  
 Thaddeus Sturges (RE FF)  
 Nathan Summers (RE Str)  
 Harry Summers (RE Str)

David Taylor (RE Dby)  
 Eleazor Taylor (RE Nwk)  
 Gilead Taylor (RE Dby)  
 Preserved Taylor (RE Rdd)  
 Daniel Terry (2)  
 Charles Thomas, mariner, (1) (2)  
 Thomas Thomas, boat builder (2)  
 Jabez Thorp, Jr. (RE FF)  
 Ephraim Tisdale (2)  
 Mix Todd (2)  
 Isaac Tomlinson (2)  
 John Tomlinson, tailor, (2)  
 Ephraim Treadwell (2)  
 Nathaniel Treadwell (2)  
 Samuel Treadwell (2)  
 Miriam Tredwell, Fairfield (CL# 443)  
 Solomon Tucker, Stamford (1)  
 Jeremiah Turner, Jr. (RE NT)  
 Miller Turner (RE NT)  
 Nathan Turner (RE NT)  
 Thomas Turney, Jr., Fairfield, died 1840 aged 87 (1)  
 Daniel Tuttle (2)

Benjamin Vaughn (RE NF)  
 Joseph Vaughn (RE NF)

Elijah Wakelee (RE Str)  
 Eliphalet Wakeman (RE FF)  
 James Wall, mariner (2)  
 John Wall, mariner (2)  
 Billias Ward, farmer (2)  
 David \* Waterbury, cooper, Stamford (1) (2) 1795  
 John \* Waterbury, schoolmaster (2) 1785  
 Peter \* Cooke Waterbury, gentleman, Stamford (1) (2) 1785  
 Sylvanus Waterbury, Stamford (CL# 371) (1) (2) (RE St)  
 William \* Waterbury, laborer (2)  
 Abraham Waters, joiner, (2) 1785  
 Samuel Watkins (2)  
 Agur Wells (RE Str)  
 Gad Wells (2)  
 Thomas Westcott (RE Dby)  
 William Wheaton (RE Nwk)  
 Josiah Wheeler (RE FF)  
 Sarah Wheeler, Fairfield, widow of Lt. Josiah (1) (see Sarah  
     Hanford) Children: 1 Josiah Wheeler  
                           2 Sarah Wheeler  
                           3 Talman Wheeler  
 Darling Whelpley (2) (RE Gr)  
 Oliver Whelpley, Fairfield (CL# 435) (1) (2)





Ephraim Wheton, Norwalk (CL# 203)  
 John White, pilot, Norwalk (CL# 181) (2)  
 Thomas White, New Haven, died 1819 aged 60 (1)  
 Sylvanus Whiting (2)  
 Betty (Hoyt) Whitney, Stamford, wife of Sylvanus (1)  
     Children: 1 Betty  
               2 Polly  
               3 Sally  
               4 Walter Hoyt  
               5 William  
               6 Huldah

Josiah Whitney (1)

Probably children of Josiah and Sarah

- 1 Josiah
- 2 Hannah
- 3 Moses
- 4 John

Samuel Whitney, Norwalk (CL# 649) (1) (2)

Sarah Whitney (1)

Capt. Sylvanus Whitney, Co. 1, laborer, Stamford (1) (2)

John Williamson (2)

Daniel Wilson (2)

Solomon Wright (2)

Uriah Wright (RE Nwk)

\* \* \* \* \*

The following text of Sylvanus Waterbury's "Memorial" (re Source No. 7), comprising four documents, was mentioned on page 20, Part I, Vol. 17, No. 1:

#AO 13/76

#519

To the Honourable Thomas Dundas &  
 Jeremy Pemberton Esquires,  
 Commissioners for investigating  
 the Claims of the American  
 Loyalists, etc.

The Memorial of Sylvanus Waterbury, late of Stamford, in the County of Fairfield in Connecticut, but now of the City Saint John, in the Province, of New Brunswick.

SHEWETH:

That your Memorialist from his Loyalty to His Majesty, and attachment to the British Government, was obliged to leave his Home in the year 1777, and join the British Army at New York with his Family; Soon after which his Property was confiscated and sold; That your Memorialist, shortly after his arrival in New York went on board His Majesty's Ship Fowey as a Pilot, in which Capacity he serv'd for several Years; and at the Evacuation of that place by his Majesty's Troops in the Year 1783, was obliged to remain there on Account of his ill State of Health, in Consequence of which he was confined in Prison at the Severest Season of



the Year, which he imagines to be the Cause of his present unhappy Situation, being depriv'd of the use of his Limbs and Speech ever since.

Thus circumstanced, your Memorialist begs leave to present you with an Account of his Losses, which tho' small, would be of great Service to him, and prays - you would take his Services and Situation into Consideration, and recommend him for Such Relief, as in your Judgements Shall seem meet, and your Memorialist Shall ever pray, ye,

Signed in behalf of my Husband

Saint John  
January 1787 -

/S/ Sarah Waterbury

- - - -

The Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, London, England.  
#AO 13/76

To Colonel Thomas Dundas  
and J. Pemberton Esquire  
Commissioners appointed to  
inquire into the Losses &  
Services of American Loyalists

The Memorial of Sylvanus Waterbury.

SHEWETH:-

That your Memorialist a short time before the Evacuation of New York in 1783 sent to England an Account of his Losses and Services by his Attorney Mr. Abraham Bates who has since informed him that - nothing could be done without his being personally present to be examined by the Commissioners appointed by Act of Parliament for that purpose -

Your Memorialist has lately received a Letter from Mr. Bates, wherein he mentions, that he had wrote to the Commissioners Appointed to come to America to enquire into the Claims of those Loyalists who from their - indigent circumstances had not been able to attend in England, and had also inclosed to their Secretary Peter Hunter Esquire, the Vouchers which your Memorialist had sent Home by him.

Your Memorialist begs leave to mention that his Petition has been such that it was impossible for him to go to England to exhibit his Claims owing to the treatment he received at New York, where he was obliged to remain for some time after the British Troops left it, on account of Sickness, which has brought on a Palsy, that deprived him of the use of his Limbs -

Thus circumstanced Your Memorialist hope you will take his care into consideration after Your arrival in this Province, as he will be enabled to produce sufficient Testimony of his Loyalty & attachment to the British Government as will entitle him to the same indulgencies as other of his fellowsufferers may receive through Your Report. And he as in Duty Bound will every pray -

St. John -  
New Brunswick  
10th April 1786

/S/ Sylv<sup>as</sup> Waterbury  
(not his own hand)





#AO 13/76

TO THE COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED BY ACT OF PARLIAMENT TO ENQUIRE INTO  
THE LOSSES AND, SERVICES OF THE AMERICAN LOYALISTS -

THE MEMORIAL OF SILVANUS WATERBURY

Sheweth, that your Memorialist is a Native of and for the most of his Lifetime resided in the Town of Stamford in Connecticut as a Mariner, that when the troubles began in America your Memorialist Opposed his Neighbors and Country Men in the revolt, for which he was often Insulted and Abused, in Consequence of which your Memorialist for his own Safety, and his Attachment to the British Constitution, Quit his Country in or about the month of October 1777 and put himself under the Protection of the British Troops at New York - for which Your Memorialist had all his small real property, Confiscated and sold for the Act of the State, that your Memorialist soon After his Arrival in New York was taken with a Lingular Illness, which rendered him unable to provide for himself or Family, Your Memorialist was therefore Under Necessity of making Application to the Government for Subsistence, which was granted, One hundred fifty dollars per Annum, which Your Memorialist received partly - that your Memorialist could not provide for self or Family, Your Memorialists Small property with the proofs thereof are set forth in the Schedule hereunto shown - And as your Memorialist is Unable to come into the Country and his Claim Small for Losses, he has therefore Impowered his friend Abraham Bates, Late of Stamford, to make application for him, to the Honourable board of Commissioners Appointed for that Purpose - Your Memorialist therefore prays that his case may be taken into your Consideration that your Memorialist may be Enabled Under your report to receive such aid or relief as his Losses and Services may be found to deserve.

London, February 10th, 1784

For Silvanus Waterbury

/S/ Abraham Bates, Attorney -

Witnesses:

For Loyalty Com<sup>er</sup>. Bexley? Robertson

For Loyalty & Property Mr. Isaac Hubbard & B.(illegible)

For do Mr. Wm. Jarvis, Gerard Street No. 29 - Soho

Please Address Mr. Abraham Bates No. 56 Threadneedle Street Near  
the Royal Exchange

#AO 13/76

Copy of title deed to estate in Stamford bought of Mr. James Rogers.  
6 Aug. 1776: for £ 100. N.Y. money

Certain tract or parcel of land lying in Stamford, containing Sixty three rods bounded southerly partly by the county road, Partly by Peter Quintards land, Westerly by Peter Quintards Land. Northerly by William Kings land & Easterly by an highway together with a dwelling house thereon it being the dwelling house & part of the lot which did belong to William King dec. in his life time with the incumbrance of the Widows right of Dower therein.

Several witnesses state (from Stamford after the war) that Silvanus has paid all clear, had no encumbrances on the estate or property.



List of Confiscated Items outside of Real Estate Taken by the  
Committee of Personal Property - Stamford -

Personal articles, prized at £ 13.10.0 (included wife's  
jewelry)

25# Wool	@ "	3.15.0
10# Cotton	@ "	0.18.4
43 yards of Linen	@ "	3.18.10
16 yards of Flannell	@ "	2. 8.0
1 Looking Glass	@ "	3.00.0
3 new Axes	@ "	1.10.0
12# of Soap	@ "	0. 6.0
1½ gallons of Soap	@ "	0.12.0
6# Gun Powder	@ "	0.18.0
12 empty Cyder Barrels	@ "	1.10.0
2 Barrels of Pork	@ "	2. 5.0
2 Barrels of Pease	@ "	0. 9.0
1 Mariner's Quadrant	@ "	1.10.0
2 Copper hoop'd Kegs	@ "	1.12.0
7 Bushels of Salt	@ "	2. 2.0

£ 40.2.2 (Ed. 17th century money  
figures seldom total ex-  
actly; this seems to be  
no exception.)

Saint John  
30th January 1787

- Concluded -

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PUBLICATION NOTICE

Subject and Person Indexes  
to  
The Stamford Genealogical Society BULLETIN  
Vols. 6 - 13

Now being published: 76 pp.; flexible cover - \$5.

Orders, with remittance accepted now, The Stamford Genealogical  
Society, P.O. Box 249, Stamford, Connecticut -6901.

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## HANFORD ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS

Emily or Emmaline Hanford (804A7) m. ---- Ross and had:

1494D1. George Ross

1494D2. Emily Ross, m. ----Walters. Their dau. Emily Walters lived in Bridgeport, Ct.

Samuel Hanford (805) m. on 11 Sept. 1805, Sally St. John, b. 25 Jan. 1783, dau. of David and Elizabeth (Waring) St. John. Sally was the twin sister of Polly (St. John) Heath, whose dau Eliza m. William Brown Hanford (575) as his first wife (SJ).

Stephen Hanford (807). Mary (called Polly) Hoyt, first wife of Stephen Hanford of Walton, Delaware Co., N.Y., was a dau. of William and Lydia (Crofoot) Hoyt of Greene, N.Y. Stephen m. (2nd), on 8 Dec. 1846 (not 1845), Maria, b. 1803 in No. Salem, N.Y., d. 13 May 1866, dau. of Jesse and Sally (Weed) Hoyt and widow of **Hiram Fitch** (H).

Hannah Hanford (808). **Thaddeus Fitch**, her husband, d. 28 Nov. 1879, not Dec. 1877. He was a son of Seymour Fitch and his wife, Dinah Hoyt, and came to Walton, N.Y., from New Canaan, Ct., in 1790. Thaddeus was a deacon of the First Congregational Church, Walton. He m. (2nd) Hannah Mead, who d. 24 Sept. 1876.

Seeley Hanford (810) d. 9 Feb. 1856. He m. (2nd), Phebe Cobine. There were no ch. by his second m.

Cynthia Hanford (812) m. Levi Hanford (571) on 13 Mar. 1817. She d. 30 Apr. 1856.

Abigail Hanford (814) d. 23 Apr. 1845.

Caroline Hanford (815) d. 7 Feb. 1832.

Emily Hanford (816) m. the widower Smith St. John, b. 8 Oct. 1795, d. in 1857 (not 1861), son of Peter and Rachel (Jones) St. John. Smith m. (1st), 26 Sept. 1824, Melissa Colman, who d. 27 June 1825 (SJ).

Julia Ann Hanford (819) d. 31 July 1876.

Eliphalet Hanford (822). His m. on 24 Nov. 1823 to Calsine Ayres was recorded in the register of the Congregational Church, New Canaan. In the 1850 census of that town, Eliph't Hanford, shoemaker, was shown as ae 52 (so b. ca. 1798); wife Calcena was then 46 and their children still living with them were:

1562A1. Sarah Hanford, ae 25, so b. ca. 1825.

1562A2. Andrew Hanford, b. ca. 1829 (ae. 21)

1562A3. Eliphalet Hanford, Jr., ae 17, so b. ca. 1833.



KEELER FAMILY RECORDS

By

Virginia H. Olson, S.G.S. Genealogist

(Editor's Note: Mr. Phillip A. Marsh of Boise, Idaho, in response to an article in the Bulletin concerning the Keeler family, has given Mrs. Olson copies of records from the family bibles of Daniel and Joseph Keeler to use as she might wish.)

\* JOSEPH KEELER BOOK  
August 7th 1805

Fitch  
in New England FTM

Daniel Keelers Book

Given me by my Father, Joseph, at his decease who departed this life Feb. 8, 1825.

My Mother died August the 13th, 1824.  
She was 80 years and 5 months old.

My Father died Feb. 8, 1825. He was 79 years 5 months, 18 days old.

Hannah Keeler my wife died Feb. 10, 1817 age 29

Joseph Keeler, My father died Feb. 8, 1825 age 79.

Kaziah Keeler, My mother died Aug. 13, 1824 age 80.

Martha Mariah died May 5, 1853.  
She was 22 years 1 month and 27 days old.

Daniel Keeler died July 21st 1854  
Aged 69 years 16 days.

The Reckard of the Birth of my family

Daniel Keeler was born July 5, 1785  
Eliza Keeler was born August 16, 1791

The birth of my children

Sherman born July 8, 1810 Sunday  
Hannah Catherine was born August 24, 1818  
Rosannah was born June 27, 1820  
William Russell was born Sept. 20, 1823  
Mary Kaziah was born April 25 Monday 1827  
Martha Mariah was born March 7, 1831 Monday

September 23, 1851

I was married to Susannah Fuller. She was 60 years and 7 months old at that time.





## TORY WORKSHEET

Obadiah Wright  
of Norwalk

Nathan Burwell, Jr.  
of Norwalk  
of the Congregation of Rev. Leaming, noted Tory preacher

✓ Thomas Hanford b. 1743 ~ son of Elnathan & Sarah (St. John)  
of Norwalk  
of the Congregation of Rev. Leaming, noted Tory preacher

✓ Nathan Jarvis m. Ann Kellogg 1757  
of Norwalk

✓ Thomas Fairweather  
of Norwalk

COUSINS { David Bolt b. 1740 m. Sarah Mott son of Richard  
of Norwalk  
William Bolt b. 1755 ~~m. Sarah Mott~~ Jr. OR father Wm. Bolt m. Lydia Fitch  
of Norwalk b. 1713

Peter White  
of Norwalk

✓ Hezekiah Whitney, 2<sup>nd</sup>  
of Norwalk

✓ Nathan Gregory m. Sarah St. John 7-3-1754 children listed p. 234 Hall's  
of Norwalk

Phillip Scribner  
of Norwalk

Hezekiah Belden  
of Norwalk

John Belden  
of Norwalk

Edward Nash  
of Norwalk

✓ Gershom Raymond b. 1724 m. Abigail Taylor 1749  
of Norwalk

✓ James Fillio m. Mary Olmstead 1759  
of Norwalk

b. 1717, Ebenezer Church m. Susannah Fitch (2) Ruth Raymond  
of Norwalk  
member of the congregation of Rev. Leaming, noted Tory preacher  
had son  
Ebenezer, Jr. b. 1758

Name	Place	date	description
------	-------	------	-------------

**John Ketchum**  
 Capt. West Indies  
 went over to the British 1777  
 and went to New Brunswick 1783  
 Sam. Ketchum New Brunswick 1783  
 British 1779  
 both had confiscated property

Wm. Wheaton lost 38 acres - New CANAAN  
 given to Norwalk 1st Soc.

land confiscated from the Rogers  
 Henry, Nehemiah, Moses  
 1 acre, 39 rods

Nathan + Sarah Bears  
 1/2 house, cider mill, shop

John White, Uriah Wright  
 20 acres

pay for the  
 burning of the  
 meeting house

David Lambert  
of Norwalk

DAVID SR. m. LAURANA Bill 1726  
had son DAVID

Goold Hoyt m. Eliz. DIMON 1765 son of James Hoyt + Hannah Lockwood  
of Norwalk  
Convicted Tory  
permitted to return home, 1777.....cost 1,000 pounds  
found again on 1780/81 list of inimical possibles of Norwalk  
member of the congregation of Rev. Leaming, noted Tory preacher

✓ Abraham Whitney b. 1723 son of Joseph + Hannah (Hoyt)  
of Norwalk

John Saunders, Jr.  
of Norwalk  
member of the congregation of Rev. Leaming, noted Tory preacher

✓ Garner Olmstead possibly son of Joseph + Mehitabel (WARNER) OR he may have had  
of Norwalk A son "GARNER"  
Feb. 1777, permitted to go home  
found again on 1780/81 list of inimical possibles of Norwalk  
member of the congregation of Rev. Leaming, noted Tory preacher

Richard Patrick  
of Norwalk

✓ Nathan Fitch  
of Norwalk  
Convicted Tory  
permitted to return home, 1777.....cost 1,000 pounds  
found in 1780/81 list of inimical possibles to be examined  
Also a Nathan Fitch was listed as having escaped the British and received pardon.  
Possibly in May of 1777

John Fitch  
found on 1780/81 list of inimical possibles to be examined

Isaac Quintard, of Stamford

Filer Dibble, of Stamford

Nathaniel Shayler, of Middletown

Jacob Perkins, Capt. Of First Co, 20<sup>th</sup> Regiment

Samuel Wheat, Capt. Of Second Co. Samuel White? Wheaton?

James Landon, of Salisbury

Solomon Marsh

Epaphras Sheldon, Esqr. Col. Of the 17<sup>th</sup> Reg.

Ira Beebe, Lt. Of Waterbury

Robert Martin, Cap. Of 15<sup>th</sup> Co, 10<sup>th</sup> Reg.





Reuben Rice, Jr., Lt. 15<sup>th</sup> Co., 10<sup>th</sup> Reg.

Rev. John Beach  
Rector at Reading and Newtown

Ralph Isaacs  
of New Haven

Abiatha Camp  
of New Haven

Ebenezer Hall  
of Fairfield

Isaac Tomlinson  
of Woodbury

Lazarus Beach  
of Reading

Andrew Fairfield  
of Reading

Nathan Lee  
of Reading

Abel Burr  
of Reading

Thomas Allen  
of Newtown

Rev. John Sayer  
of Fairfield

Ebenezer Holby (Hobby?) (or Holly?)  
of Stamford  
Convicted Tory  
permitted to return home 1777

Elliot Green  
of Stamford  
Convicted Tory  
permitted to return home, 1777 .....cost 1,000 pounds

? Jonathan Husted m. Mary CARTER 12-3-1744 no children  
of Stamford  
Convicted Tory  
permitted to return home, 1777.....cost 1,000 pounds

Josiah Seeley  
of Stamford  
Convicted Tory  
permitted to return home, 1777.....cost 1,000 pounds



Benjamin James  
of Stamford  
Convicted Tory  
permitted to return home, 1777.....cost 1,000 pounds

Isaac Hubbard  
of Stamford  
Convicted Tory  
permitted to return home, 1777.....cost 1,000 pounds

Jacob Scofield  
of Stamford  
Convicted Tory  
permitted to return home, 1777.....cost 1,000 pounds

Frank Smith  
of Norwalk  
Convicted Tory  
permitted to return home, 1777.....cost 1,000 pounds

- Stephen Keller/Keeler?? *A Stephen Keeler m. Hannah MARVIN 1773*  
Of Norwalk  
Convicted Tory  
permitted to return home, 1777.....cost 1,000 pounds

- John Betts *b. 1692 m. Damaris Lockwood - had son John b. 1735*  
of Norwalk *Lost 11 ACRES in confiscated property in CANAAN - John Betts*  
Convicted Tory  
permitted to return home, 1777.....cost 1,000 pounds

John Sanford  
confined in Mansfield  
permitted to go to Reading to settle his mother's estate....cost 1,000 pounds

Job Barniack (*Burlock?*) *If so he was shot dead on his doorstep in Wilton*  
prob. of Norwalk  
Feb. 1777, permitted to return home

Enock Warren  
prob. of Norwalk  
Feb. 1777, permitted to return home

- Joseph Olmstead *brother to GARNER? Son of Joseph + Mehitable? Signer as witness*  
prob. of Norwalk *to will of Eliz. Ellis*  
Feb. 1777, permitted to return home

Richard Patrick  
of Norwalk, residing in Coventry  
Feb. 1777, permitted to return home

Frederick Dibble  
prob. of Stamford  
Feb. 1777, permitted to return home

Stephen Wilson  
of Stamford, residing at Lebanon





Feb. 1777, permitted to return home

Nathaniel Munday  
of Stamford

Feb. 1777, permitted to return home

- Samuel Crissey *There was a John Cressey m. Rebecca Knowles, Son or Gr. son?*  
of Stamford  
Feb. 1777, permitted to return home

- William Fitch *b. 1756 - 1804 m. Elix. Holly 1781*  
of Stamford  
Feb. 1777, allowed to return home

John Wilcocks  
of Killingsworth  
confined in Willington  
Feb. 1777, allowed to return home

Ira Ward  
of Killingsworth  
confined in Willington  
Feb. 1777, allowed to return home

James Ward  
of Killingsworth  
confined in Willington  
Feb. 1777, allowed to return home

George Filliot (Fillio??)  
of Ridgefield  
Confined at Fairfield and Hartford  
1777, released on paying costs

Hubbard  
Visited persons infected with small pox and then went among people not so infected.  
Put in charge of the selectmen at Lebanon ?????

John Wilson  
Visited persons infected with small pox and then went among people not so infected.  
Put in charge of the selectmen at Lebanon ?????

- Hanford Fairweather *Poss. son of Thomas & Mary (Hanford)? See Thomas above*  
of Norwalk  
Sentenced at Windham jail for 2 years  
Worked outside jail during days, in jail at night  
Released to move his family to Windham to be with him while serving sentence.

John McKay  
of Norwalk  
Property confiscated, sentenced to 2 years in 1776  
May 1777, was released and property restored to him

Barlow Trecothick  
of Hebron  
Had items confiscated, probably farm land



John Tomlinson  
of Great Britain  
Had land confiscated

Rev. Samuel Peters  
of Great Britain  
Had land confiscated

Isaac Hoyt and wife Mary *MAY HAVE BEEN ISAAC - wife unknown of DANBURY*  
of Danbury *OR possibly son, the son m. AN Amy STARR*  
Isaac called late of Danbury  
Mary said she was a Patriot  
but Isaac was a Tory, joined the British while on their raid of Danbury  
received her request of part of his property

Nicholas Brown  
of Hartford  
Went to enemy at New York and left wife, Hannah, and 4 children  
Hannah given liberty to follow her husband

Asa Church and wife Hannah  
of Danbury  
Absconded to New York  
Hannah given liberty to follow her husband to New York

Samuel Doolittle and wife Eunice (Cole) dau. of Thomas Cole  
of Waterbury  
Feb. 1778, had his property confiscated  
Wife and 3 children left to be supported by Eunice's father  
Her wedding portion of the property was returned to Thomas for their support  
listing many household items

Azariah Prichard  
Gone to Canada  
Wife given permission to follow with a bed and furniture

Joseph Hanford *poss. son of Haynes & Eliz. (Ketchum)*  
of Fairfield  
Jan. 1780, had property confiscated

William Nichols  
of Waterbury  
apparently sent families to Lord How to be with the husbands  
But kept their properties

Rev. Jeremiah Learning *Learning - Pastor St. Paul's Episcopal Church*  
formerly of Norwalk,  
land confiscated and liable to be sold for the benefit of the state  
included negro slave Pomp, 1780

Major Hudson  
a Tory enemy of Long Island  
had a slave called James Cromwell

Moses Northrup, Patience his wife, Eunice his daughter





Daniel Lockwood  
released at the request of the selectmen of Greenwich



Issac Peck

released at the request of the selectmen of Greenwich

= Gilbert Lockwood - son of Still John Lockwood of Greenwich  
released at the request of the selectmen of Greenwich

Solomon Wright

released at the request of the selectmen of Greenwich

Isaac Anderson

released at the request of the selectmen of Greenwich

James Merrill

released at the request of the selectmen of Greenwich

Benjamin Wilson

released at the request of the selectmen of Greenwich

Nathan Merrill

released at the request of the selectmen of Greenwich

David and Benjamin Peet  
of Stratford

Jabez Sherwood, Jr. — Prob. relation to Matthew Shewood who moved  
prob. of Greenwich his family to PA

Hezekiah Holby

prob. of Greenwich

Solomon Merrit, Jr.

prob. of Greenwich

Silas Knap

probably of Greenwich

William Marshall

probably of Greenwich

Joseph Galpin

prob of Greenwich

Jonathan Mead

of Greenwich

Roger Veits

of Simsbury

Daniel Humphreys

of New Haven

Disciple of Robert Sanderman, Oct. 1777

because of their religion wanted to move to a place under dominion of the King

Titus Smith

of New Haven

Disciple of Robert Sanderman, Oct. 1777

because of their religion, wanted to move to a place under dominion of the King





Richard Woodhull  
of New Haven  
Disciple of Robert Sanderman, Oct. 1777  
because of their religion, wanted to move to a place under dominion of the King

Thomas Goold  
of New Haven  
Disciple of Robert Sanderman, Oct. 1777  
because of their religion, wanted to move to a place under dominion of the King

Joseph Pyncheon  
of New Haven  
Disciple of Robert Sanderman, Oct. 1777  
because of their religion, wanted to move to a place under dominion of the King

Theophilus Chamberlain  
of New Haven  
Disciple of Robert Sanderman, Oct. 1777  
because of their religion, wanted to move to a place under dominion of the King

Benjamin Smith  
of New Haven  
Disciple of Robert Sanderman, Oct. 1777  
Because of their religion, wanted to move to a place under dominion of the King

William Richmond  
of New Haven  
Disciple of Robert Sanderman, Oct. 1777  
Because of their religion, wanted to move to a place under dominion of the King

Dr. William Samuel Johnson  
of Stratford

Pardon Tillinghast Taber  
of New London  
escaped from the British and received pardon

Elijah Elmore  
of Stratford  
escaped from the British and received pardon

Israel Rowland  
of Redding  
escaped from the British and received pardon

Samuel Hawley  
of Redding  
escaped from the British and received pardon

David Manvill  
of Waterbury  
escaped from the British and received pardon

Jesse Tuttle  
of Waterbury



escaped from the British and received pardon

Seth Warner  
of Waterbury  
escaped from the British and received pardon

Ephraim Warner  
of Waterbury  
escaped from the British and received pardon

Richard Miles  
of Waterbury  
escaped from the British and received pardon

Daniel Finch  
of Waterbury  
escaped from the British and received pardon

John Morehouse  
of Danbury  
escaped from the British and received pardon

Comfort Benedict  
of Danbury  
escaped from the British and received pardon

James Benham  
of Wallingford  
escaped from the British and received pardon

Michael Ames  
of New Haven  
escaped from the British and received pardon

John Davis, Jr.  
of Derby  
escaped from the British and received pardon

Elisha Fox  
residence not stated  
escaped from the British and received pardon

Nathan Fitch  
of Greenwich  
escaped from the British and received pardon.....see Nathan above

David Washburn  
of New Milford  
Convicted Nov. 1777, under sentence of death for high treason  
Execution to take place Nov. 1779, suspended until 1780  
They were exchanged as prisoners of war, so avoided execution

David Whelpley  
Execution to take place Nov. 1779, suspended until 1780  
Before then they were exchanged as prisoners of war, so avoided execution.

Solomon Ferris





Execution to take place Nov. 1779, suspended until 1780  
Before then they were exchanged as prisoners of war, so avoided execution

William Peck

Execution to take place Nov. 1779, suspended until 1780  
Before then they were exchanged as prisoners of war, so avoided execution

Nehemiah Scriber

of Norwalk  
Under sentence of death for high treason  
Jan. 1779, sentence changed confinement and labor at Newgate

Moses Dunbar

Was hung for high treason on Execution Hill, Hartford, March 19, 1777  
Prob. of Waterbury

Dr. Benjamin Church

Confined at Norwich Nov. 1775 to May

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYS 433

LECTURE 1

1.1

1.2

Subj: **Loyalists**  
Date: 8/1/2007 8:27:25 PM US Eastern Standard Time  
From: [kkfitch@att.net](mailto:kkfitch@att.net)  
To: [WFitch5413@aol.com](mailto:WFitch5413@aol.com)

Hi there. Just a SHORT one. Thought you might find this interesting.

1c. Book Notice (1)

The Burdens of Loyalty: Refugee Tales from the First American Civil War

By Stephen Davidson

[stephendavids@gmail.com](mailto:stephendavids@gmail.com)

Those with Loyalist ancestors (or distant Tory uncles and aunts) will enjoy this account of the refugee experiences of the Redding, Connecticut, family of John and Hepzibeth (BETTS) LYON.

The author traces the family's flight from Connecticut in 1776 to a Long Island refugee camp, to their journey away from the new United States of America. It ends with them founding a new settlement in 1783.

During their journey, the LYONS met revolutionary war refugees from many parts of New England. More than 100 of these Loyalist stories are also given. Of special interest is the annotated passenger list of the "Union," the first ship to bring Loyalists to modern day New Brunswick, Canada--including the first black Loyalists to enter the province.

(Previously published in RootsWeb Review: 1 August 2007, Vol. 10, No. 31.)

\* \* \* \*

This e-book is available for \$5.25 (CDN) from:

<http://www.loonielink.com/>





Subj: **The Burdens of Loyalty:**  
 Date: 8/2/2007 8:42:37 AM US Eastern Standard Time  
 From: [kkfitch@att.net](mailto:kkfitch@att.net)  
 To: [WFitch5413@aol.com](mailto:WFitch5413@aol.com)

Hullo there Bette ffitich.... Thought I might save you some time, and send along the "Burdens" info, and first FREE chapter. Saw no ffitich's listed at the bottom of the first chapter. Then, lists NO Betts either, yet several BETTS listed in this FREE chapter. Who knows if holds any ffitich's. Enjoy. kk

[http://www.loonielink.com/joomla/component/page/shop.product\\_details/flypage,shop.flypage/product\\_i](http://www.loonielink.com/joomla/component/page/shop.product_details/flypage,shop.flypage/product_i)



## The Burdens of Loyalty

By: [Stephen Davidson](#)

ISBN: 9781897306505

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Edition: First

( [Trinity Enterprise](#) )

**Price per Unit (piece): \$5.25**

(including 6 % tax)

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### eBook:

Stephen Davidson began researching his Loyalist roots. What he discovered was a whole history of a group of people, the first Loyalists to arrive in Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada. These were people who remained loyal to King George III during the American War of Independence, what Davidson terms "the first American civil war." Focusing on his ancestors, John and Hepzibeth Lyon, Davidson does a magnificent job of exploring how these people survived those turbulent times; their strength of character shines through every paragraph.

[Download the first chapter free here.](#)

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**Click on the link below to read a review of *Burdens of Loyalty* written by Paul Bunnell of *The Loyalist Quarterly*:**

<http://www.loonielink.com/joomla/content/view/285/218/>

# REPORT

The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the company. It is a very important part of the report and should be written in a clear and concise manner. The second part of the report deals with the specific details of the company's operations. It is also a very important part of the report and should be written in a clear and concise manner.

The third part of the report deals with the company's financial performance. It is a very important part of the report and should be written in a clear and concise manner. The fourth part of the report deals with the company's future prospects. It is also a very important part of the report and should be written in a clear and concise manner.

The fifth part of the report deals with the company's management. It is a very important part of the report and should be written in a clear and concise manner. The sixth part of the report deals with the company's employees. It is also a very important part of the report and should be written in a clear and concise manner.

The seventh part of the report deals with the company's customers. It is a very important part of the report and should be written in a clear and concise manner. The eighth part of the report deals with the company's suppliers. It is also a very important part of the report and should be written in a clear and concise manner.

The ninth part of the report deals with the company's competitors. It is a very important part of the report and should be written in a clear and concise manner. The tenth part of the report deals with the company's industry. It is also a very important part of the report and should be written in a clear and concise manner.

of Hartford, Wethersfield and Windsor" (which towns harbored most of the Norwalkers before they came here) "belonged to families which had arms granted to them in Great Britain." But, arms or no arms, they were filled with the right spirit: courage, fortitude, instinct of colonization. Our forefathers had brawn as well as brains and they needed both. Norwalk was a wilderness when they appeared on the scene, beautiful no doubt, but terrifying just the same. The trees were huge and closely grown; and dense underbrush, rotting logs, swamps and bogs, presented difficulties that only the most courageous could face and overcome. The first settlers were fortunate in one respect: there was a shelter here upon their arrival. Some historians maintain that it was a "long black house" built by the planters who had already spent several months here. Others say there were several rude log cabins here. At any rate there was an overhead covering of some sort which provided sufficient shelter until the colonists could provide better.

#### HOME LOTS GRANTED

Just when the original grants of home lots to the first settlers were made is not known. At first, lands were owned in common by the settlers, but later, divisions and allotments were made. The early land records are generally undated and are sandwiched in between other records of the years from 1670 to 1690. Over some of the land records, a hand other than the one which originally wrote the record, has inserted the date of 1652. Whether or not that was the correct date of the recording of the land we cannot prove.

The original idea of the home lot was to foster cooperation and coordination in the little colony. It was decided to allow each settler four acres and these plots were assigned, according to age, character, rank and property. Note the following rule:

"That in dividing of lands to the several persons in each town, regard is to be had partly to the number of persons





# HISTORY OF FAIRFIELD

## CHAPTER I

1639—1650

### DISCOVERY AND SETTLEMENT

Discovery of Uncoway.—Its natural advantages.—Roger Ludlow's commission to settle Pequonock.—Indians of the country.—First purchase of Indian lands.—Character of the country.—Samp-mortar Rock.—Pequot Swamp.—Named Fairfield.—Ludlow's companions.—First five home lots.—Ludlow fined.—His apology.—Settlements of Stamford and New Haven.—Fear of an English governor.—Connecticut patent.—Indian purchases and privileges.—Laws.—Constables.—State archives.—Courts.—Ludlow lays out the town.—Additional planters.—Ludlow purchases Norwalk.—Spring of 1640.—Ludlow a judge of the General Court.—Colony prison.—Mere-stones.—Tobacco.—First town and school-house.—Planters of 1640.—Home industry.—Improvement of lands.—Trade.—Pipe-staves.—Fencing.—Hides.—Flax.—Pequonnock bounds.—Uncoway Indian tribute.—Sumptuary laws.—Imports and exports.—Shipping.—Truthfulness.—Trouble with the Dutch.—Creditors and debtors.—Ludlow deputy-governor.—Indian troubles.—Militia called out.—Condition of the planters in 1642.—Assistants and Deputies of 1643.—Arms forbidden the Indians.—Jurors.—Confederation of the colonies.—Grand-jurors.—Marriages.—Plantations guarded.—Governor Stuyvesant.—Indians rise at Stamford.—General fast proclaimed.—Fairfield Indians troublesome.—Ludlow's prompt action.—General combination of the Indians.—General Court laws for town courts, merchandise, liquors, inns, land, fences, town clerks, and trade with the Indians.—Mills.—Long Island Indians.—Bequest of William Frost to Christ's Church.—Maintenance of ministers and students at Harvard College.—Herdsmen.—Marks of private cattle, etc.—Magistrates and Deputies of 1645.—Training days.—Colony fair.—General tax for purchasing Saybrook fort.—War between Uncas and the Narragansetts.—War declared against the Narragansetts.—Peace established in August.—Assistants and Deputies of 1645.—Jury trials.—Criminals not allowed to vote.—Governor Haynes to visit the Indian reservations.—Dutch and Indian troubles.—Tobacco.—Guards for the Sabbath and lecture days at Fairfield.—Seaside annual tax.—Whaling.—Magistrates and Deputies of 1648.—Salary of governor and deputy-governor.—Bankside farmers.—Stratford ferry.—Uncoway Creek mill.—Military laws.—Indians of Stamford.—Uncas sent to Stamford.—Thomas Newton leaves Fairfield.—Connecticut patent.—Cambridge platform.—Death of Charles I.

IN the subjugation of the powerful tribe of Indians known as the Pequots, in the great fight at Sasqua or Pequot-swamp, the pioneers of Connecticut achieved an important victory, one which in its results has scarcely a parallel in the history of warfare. Peace with the much-dreaded savages who roamed at will about the feeble settlements, and in fact throughout all New England, was thereby secured. Prosperity followed quickly after days of great adversity; and the planters found themselves not only in position to extend their own borders, but to enlarge the juris-



# Ridgefield<sup>1</sup>

Samuel Goodrich

The Town of Ridgefield was located to a number of the Inhabitants of the Towns of Milford and Norwalk, by the General Assembly of the State of Connecticut the 13<sup>th</sup> of May AD 1708—A pattent was given for S<sup>d</sup> Township in the year 1714 and is called the old pattent:—The northerly part of the present Township containing Ridgebury Society is comenly called the New Pattent, and was obtained by a grant or pattent from the General Assembly the 31<sup>st</sup> of June AD 1731. The Soil right of S<sup>d</sup> tracts was purchased of the Natives at sundry times. The first purchase was made AD 1708 for the consideration of £100 of Catoonah, (the Sachem)—Wequacomick—Wawhamawwee, Naranneka, and Cawweherin. One purchase was made for £4— the 18<sup>th</sup> of AD 1715 of Oreneka (alias) Tackora. One purchase Nov 22<sup>d</sup> AD 1721 for £6 of Taccore (alias) Narranneka. One the 7<sup>th</sup> of March AD. 1729 of Tapporneck,—Moses, Sam, and Ammon. One on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April AD. 1729 of Ahtoppeer, Mokens, Jacob Turkey, Neshucawpo, Tawgnawtasse, Wawsachein, Wawcati and captain Jacob. One 28<sup>th</sup> of Feb<sup>y</sup> AD 1738/9 for £10.15. of Taparneck, (Captain), Ammon, Crow, Old Moses and young Moses. One y<sup>e</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> of Dec<sup>r</sup> 1739 for £6.5 of Betty, Jacob Turkey and Mokquaroose; and lastly one on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of Dec<sup>r</sup> AD 1734 of Topornick and his sons for a valuable sum Viz of S<sup>d</sup> Topornick, Moses, Tom, Stephen and Beans.

1<sup>d</sup> In consequence of the exchange made by this State with the State of New York in 1733 for part of Stamford and Greenwich, of what is commonly called the oblong; one Mile and 3/4 in width, the whole length of the first pattent, was cut off<sup>[f]</sup> from Ridgefield. The whole Town therefore contains but two located Societies being the first or Old Society and Ridgbury. The town in its present form lies nearly in the common figure of a Coffin. The first Society contains about 16,000 Acres, and Ridgbury society in this town about 11,000. The whole township is about 15 Miles in Length, y<sup>e</sup> Width at the S. End about 3 Miles and 3/4. At about 1/3<sup>d</sup> of the length Northward it is about 5 Miles wide and at the North end only half a mile. It is bounded South by Norwalk; East by Reading and part of Danbury; North by Danbury and New Fairfield and West by the State of New York. There were in the year A.D. 1799, 10 Schools kept in the first Society by Masters in as many schoolhouses built for that purpose and the number of schollars taken by the visiting Committe were 433. There are three Foreigners in the Town who are paupers, Viz Two Men and one woman; one of the men named *Yabecomb*, was from Wales; The other named *Jagger*, is an old man about 95 years, an Englishman who served under the Duke of Cumberland at

the battle of Culloden in 1745 and was in flanders with the regiment previous to that battle.

2<sup>d</sup> There is the appearance of Sundry Indian graves at a place commonly called Norzens Ridge. There is one Mountain which retains its Indian name, *Asproom*, (high or lofty), and there are several ponds as Mamenenusquah, Nisopack Aokeets and nearby the east line of the Town in Reading one by the name Umpewauge. There are no Indians at present living in the town, except one who has learned the Masons trade and has married a white woman. One died in the town about 2 years since at a great age not certainly known, but supposed 96 or more.

3<sup>d</sup> The general face of the land is gently swelling Ridges extending from North to South tho there are some broken abrupt Rocky precipices & a considerable quantity of very stoney land which is yet and probably will be reserved to grow wood and timber upon. The soils on the Ridges are generally composed of Loom and clay and there is a considerable quantity in some parts of the town of a light limestone soil, but little of gravel. The low lands or swamps of which there are several are generally a deep black soil made by the fallen timber and leaves and the wash from the ridges, but they suffer much for the want of draining. The Soil was originally very fertile and produced plenty of Excellent Wheat which has generally failed since the appearance of the hessian fly tho now & then it does well on some favourite spots.

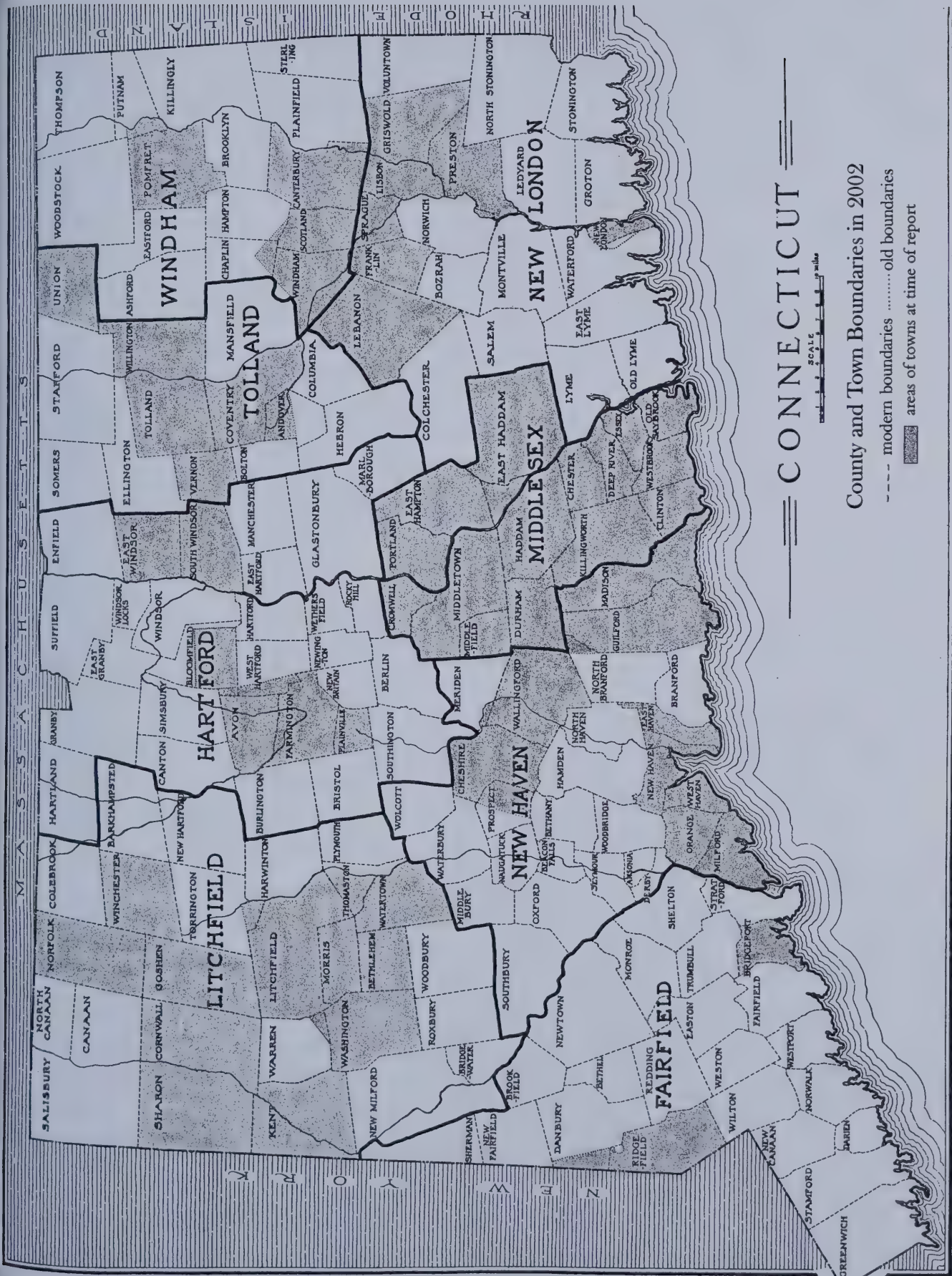
It at present produces good rye and indian Corn a considerable more than for the consumption of the inhabitants; flax, large quantities of oats, Buckwheat, beans and peas—Onions grow as well in some of our gardens as in any part of the State—The land is very good for grass.

4. The middle of the Township lies about 14 Miles from the landing at Norwalk and is equally distant on the highest land between the Rivers Hudson & Ausatonuck<sup>2</sup> and in particular the Hill or Ridge lying west of and near the town street is by way of eminence called the *High Ridge* from which in clear weather the Mountains west of the Hudson and the west Rock near New Haven may be clearly seen and the sound for 50 or 60 miles. The waters rise at the foot of this hill and run in different directions discharging into the sound at Fairfield, Norwalk & Stamford and into the River Hudson by the river *Titicus* and thro the river Croton.—The waters also which rise in this town discharge into the Ausatonuck at the great falls in New Milford. There are therefore no streams of any considerable magnitude and consequence before they leave the limits of the town, and they are all frequently during

<sup>1</sup> Indian name Candoto.







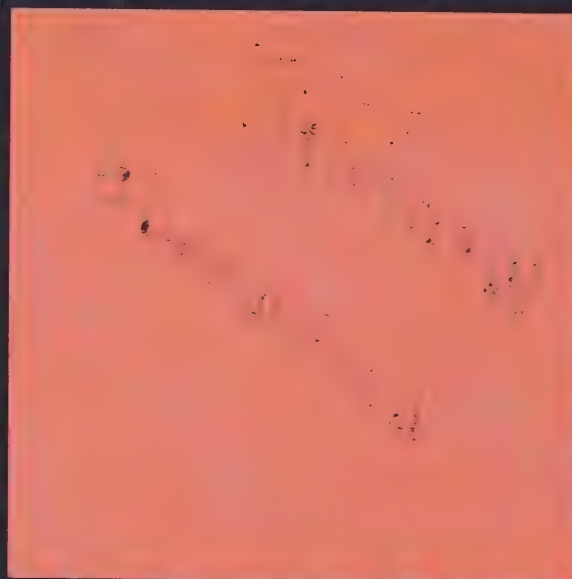






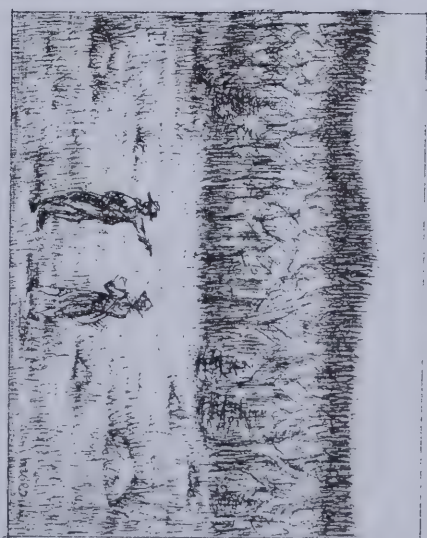


Weston  
Lockwoods



## NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. For information about the original human inhabitants of the Weston area, I have relied upon John W. DeForest, *History of the Indians of Connecticut* (Hartford, 1853); *The Indians of Connecticut* (New Haven, 1936) and *Connecticut circa 1625: Its Indian Trails, Villages, and Sachemdoms* (Hartford, 1934), both by Mathias Spiess; Frank G. Speck, *Native Tribes and Dialects of Connecticut* (Washington, 1928); Kenneth H. Kinner, "Archaeological Investigations: Lucius Pond Ordway Preserve—Devil's Den," *The Nature Conservancy* (Washington, 1971); and Helen Partridge, *Easton, Its History* (Easton, 1972).
2. Aspects of Weston's geologic history are described in Thomas A. Cook, *Geology of Connecticut* (Hartford, 1933); William N. Rice, *The Physical Geography and Geology of Connecticut* (Hartford, 1930); Carlos Carranza, "Geology and Geologic History: Lucius Pond Ordway Preserve—Devil's Den," *The Nature Conservancy* (Arlington, Virginia, 1971); Dominick/Oakrock Associates, *The Weston Environmental Resources Manual* (Weston, 1977).
3. *The Weston Environmental Resources Manual*, mentioned in the note above, contains information about Weston's soils, as does David B. Thompson, "Soil Survey: Lucius Pond Ordway Preserve—Devil's Den," *The Nature Conservancy* (Arlington, Virginia, 1971).
4. Information about Weston's flora and fauna may be found in John C. Pease and John A. Niles, *A Gazetteer of the States of Connecticut and Rhode-Island* (Hartford, 1819) and in Phillip Barske, "Wildlife Survey: Lucius Pond Ordway Preserve—Devil's Den," *The Nature Conservancy* (Arlington, Virginia, 1971).
5. Joseph Milton Kirk discussed this aspect of the physical environment in his work, *The Weather and Climate of Connecticut* (Hartford, 1939). The Bridgeport Hydraulic Company has been collecting weather data since 1894.



## THE DIVISION OF NORTHWESTERN FAIRFIELD

1639 / 1682

*"To every man his proportion  
of land"*

It was many years after Roger Ludlow's arrival in Fairfield that Englishmen came to realize all the advantages and disadvantages of Weston's physical environment. For before Weston could be settled, Fairfield not only had to be settled but had to have sufficient population to make its residents feel crowded enough to be impelled into the back country.

Initially, Fairfield's population was very small. Ludlow might have brought as many as eight or ten families with him when he came from Windsor in 1639, but the town records list the names of only four of the persons who accompanied him; these were Thomas Staples, Thomas Newton, Edward Jessop, and Edmund Strickland. Shortly after the arrival of these first settlers, another group, not much larger in number, came from Watertown, Massachusetts. Still, Fairfield remained a plantation with an extremely small number of residents.<sup>1</sup>

Eventually, the colonial leaders in Hartford recognized the economic folly of supporting such a small settlement; they complained of the "great expense yearly to be laid out to fetch in necessary





commodities."<sup>2</sup> To offset these expenses, the Hartford officials adopted a measure designed to encourage the production of staple crops for export. The Connecticut General Court, thus, on February 7, 1641, ordered that one hundred acres of tillable ground and twenty acres of meadowlands be granted to anyone within the plantation who would improve twenty acres the first year, eighty acres the second, and the remaining acres the third. When one considers whatever improvements were made had to be made by the energy that only human beings, aided and abetted by animal power, could provide, the General Court's offer seems less than enticing. But the offer did prove attractive, and soon the promise of land brought persons from other, more crowded, areas of New England to Fairfield. In the summer of 1644, nearly fifteen families from Concord, Massachusetts, led by their minister, John Jones, left that populous town for the open spaces of Fairfield.

Although by 1644 the leaders of Fairfield had bought only a small part of the lands that they would eventually purchase from the Indians, there was land aplenty for the original settlers, as well as for those who were then arriving. Subsequent purchases of land more than kept pace with the influx of new residents. In 1644, what would become Weston remained a vast wilderness, still largely the property of local Indians, still unvisited by the English who inhabited Fairfield.

Originally, Fairfield had been known as Uncoway or Uncoa, the Indian name for the area. But the natural wealth of the region so impressed its residents that they abandoned the Indian name in order to refer to their town as Fairfield, for the "fair" or pleasing fields they found there. From many points of view, the area was rich. The salt marshes provided hay in abundance. Behind the shore was a narrow coastal plain that offered good lands for farming. The town had fine harbors, in particular the one at Black Rock, and several streams provided water power to run the town's mills. By 1654, Fairfield was the fourth largest town in Connecticut and was certainly the leading settlement in the western part of the colony.

Of particular interest in the history of Weston is the way Fairfield dealt with the question of distributing land. The division of Fairfield's northwestern lands would eventually allow population to move to that yet-untrudden wilderness.

Even before the settlement of Connecticut's towns, Englishmen had already developed certain well-defined ideas about how a town should be established. The colonists at Jamestown, in Virginia, as well as those in Ulster, in northern Ireland, had created an example which

the founders of Fairfield would follow. The example was one of a nucleated village where the home lots, from which would extend the lands that were to provide pasturage, meadowlands, croplands, and lumber and firewood, stood grouped closely together.<sup>3</sup>

Ludlow had chosen the site of Fairfield carefully. Not only was it close to streams, salt marshes, a good harbor, and rich agricultural land; it was also in a position to be easily defended. The home lots were located around four central squares, and these lots were of more or less uniform size, about two and a half acres each. Also within the center of the town was land reserved for the meetinghouse and for the minister's home. In fact, the meetinghouse stood at the junction of the town's four squares. Streets were created to provide each property owner with access to his property and were not designed to facilitate communication or travel for their own sake.

Beyond the village itself were the vast landholdings of the residents. In the Connecticut colony, the General Court had granted to the towns the "power to dispose of their owne lands undisposed of," once the General Court had granted official recognition to the town's claim to its lands. This meant that Fairfield had the right to make grants to whomever it saw fit. In 1662, the first division of lands beyond the center occurred. The town meeting decided that "a new planting feild" was to be granted "to those inhabitants of the towne that shall desire to have land layd out."<sup>4</sup> Approximately 320 acres were distributed. Each master of a family received half an acre in his own right, a quarter-acre for his wife and for each child, and two acres for every one hundred pounds of assessed real property he held.

This was the first of several land divisions in Fairfield. In 1669, 1671, 1672, 1682, and twice in 1688, similar divisions took place. What eventually developed looked much like the English strip system of land division, where long, rectangular lots were assigned in regular order to various owners. But there was an important difference between the system that grew up in Connecticut and the English open-field system. The size of the average holding in Fairfield was vastly larger than the average holding in an English open field. In England, a reasonably successful man might accumulate as many as fifty acres, these acres consisting of a series of narrow strips, about two rods, or 33 feet, in width, and about a furlong, or 660 feet, in length. In Fairfield, a single lot would be several times larger than an English farmer's holdings. The difference lay not in the arrangement of land but in the amount of land involved.

The residents of Fairfield eagerly participated in these land divi-





sions. One must recall that the first generation of Englishmen to reside in Fairfield were still basically medieval men with medieval values. To be sure, the medieval economic and social system in England had already badly disintegrated. It was a system based upon land; for a person to be powerful economically and socially, he must possess land. But it was nearly impossible to acquire land in England. This was hardly the case in America; and when land became available in Fairfield, men, for a variety of psychological as well as economic motives, demanded to be included in the division. Committed as they were to the sacred tenets of Puritanism, this first generation of Fairfield inhabitants could be surprisingly materialistic when the question of land was at hand.

The economic motives that encouraged interest in these divisions are obvious. The possession of more land meant access to more lumber and firewood; it meant additional acres of pasture or meadow; it meant more land that could be cleared for the plow; it meant land that could be held for speculation. But in addition to being concerned over their own interests, Fairfield farmers also had to be sure that they had enough land to allow their sons to be as prosperous as they were. Primogeniture never flourished in Connecticut. Each of a man's sons expected to own a farm. The practice that developed in Connecticut was one of dividing an estate among all the sons and even holding some land separate for the daughters. This meant that the sons could never inherit as much land as the father, and for them to prosper at all required the father to accumulate vast—at least, by English standards—tracts of land. So Fairfield men participated with genuine zest when land was divided. In 1681, Thomas Staples owned 1,400 acres in Fairfield; Nathan Gold owned even more: 1,500 acres. Fifty-eight persons held more than four hundred acres each.

There were other reasons, as well, for Fairfield residents to favor these land divisions. The distribution of lands in seventeenth-century New England towns, while it failed to eliminate social distinctions, did help to keep the peace by guaranteeing a common concern with agriculture among the residents. The residents were also encouraged in their loyalty to the town, which, after all, was bestowing a great benefit upon them.

The distributions that took place in Fairfield and in other Connecticut towns after 1664 were, at least in part, designed to settle the question of the validity of certain land titles. In 1664, Charles II, who had recently acceded to the throne upon the restoration of the monarchy in England, granted to his brother, the Duke of York, jurisdic-

tion over the lands between the Connecticut and Delaware rivers. Acknowledgement of this grant meant that all undivided lands in Connecticut west of the Connecticut River would become the Duke of York's to do with as he pleased. In the decade that followed this grant, Connecticut leaders took steps to guarantee that these lands would be kept out of the duke's hands. They did this by conveying these undivided lands to individuals. Thus, in Fairfield, there were three land divisions in the ten years that followed the 1664 grant; and, furthermore, the ownership of the undivided lands was placed in the hands of a body of proprietors, who held the lands in common.

All of these various factors prompted the Fairfield town meeting of January 14, 1671, to decree that there "shall be a devisiion of the greatest part of the Commons of Fairfield to the severall particular Inhabetants for ther propriety to be layd out as the Towne shal conclude hereafter." The town meeting also agreed "that the rule of the devisiion of the above said Commons to the severall Inhabetants that hath right to divide shall be by persons and the present list of estate," with each person to be valued as follows: "a master of a family thirty pound[,] a wife Ten pounds and a child at Ten pounds: which vallu shall be added to the list of estates: & according to the Totall sum pertayning to each person they shall receive ther proportions." William Hill accepted the task of preparing a plan for the division of the land. He was to have completed his work within a month's time.<sup>5</sup>

Of all the various land divisions within Fairfield, this one was certainly the most important to the history of Weston. For this division would assign ownership of the lands that make up modern Weston. Although settlement would be slow in coming to northwestern Fairfield, the division of January, 1671, was the first step in the process that would bring population to the area.

On January 26, 1671, the town meeting agreed upon the details of the division. "It is ordered that the west devedent is to begin by norwolke bounds and to run back eight score and soe to run towards the Towne eastward from the said bounds about Two miles and half," the plan began. The dividend land on the east was to begin at the Stratford line and extend west. The town ordered that there should be a common located at the southern end of these lands and that this common should be a half-mile wide. "The Towne hath ordered that ther shall be one mile broad from the above said half mile common to run into the Country to the end of the bounds to remain a common forever." What was created, then, were two commons: the one called the half-mile common, which was a half-mile wide, running roughly





Before adjourning, the town appointed John Banks, Seviant Squire, Cornelius Hull, and Josiah Harvey to lay out "to every man his proportion of land." The lands on either side of the mile of common were to begin "next the half mile common and so to run back to the end of our bounds." Necessary highways were to be included, and the town ordered "that there shall be layd to the parsonage a proportion of common after the rate of Two hundred pound estate" and "to a school commonage after the rate of a hundred pound estate."<sup>7</sup>

What the town had created was a system of long lots, each of which began at the half-mile common and extended to the northern boundary of the town. Those long lots that were west of the mile common included more territory than that which would eventually make up Weston. But the land division of 1671 created two special sections in northern Fairfield; they would eventually become Weston and Eastern Fairfield. The existence of Weston was still far in the future, but with the benefit of hindsight, which obviously was unavailable to those who lived in Fairfield in 1671, one can see that a process had begun that would create a community far from the center of life in Fairfield.

The long lots varied in width from roughly fifty feet up to 1,150 feet, and each was named for its first owner, although over the years the names of the lots would change as their ownership changed. But in 1671, the first lot in what would one day be Weston was assigned to Jacob Gray. His property was immediately west of the mile common. Beyond his long lot was the long lot of Jehu Burr, and beyond that the long lot of John Banks, and so forth, until finally the long lot of Simon Couch stood next to the Norwalk line.

Appended to this chapter is a list of the individuals to whom were granted long lots west of the mile common. This is the list as it was recorded on December 30, 1681. Obviously, some significant change had occurred since the original granting of the lots nearly eleven years earlier. The frequent exchange and sale of the lots, even before the areas had been settled, makes it nearly impossible to establish a precise list of their owners for any given period. A particular lot might be owned by one person in 1671 and by another in 1681 and by yet another in 1691. For example, Simon Couch owned the lot closest to the Norwalk line according to the original division of 1671. But in 1681, John Applegate owned that lot. Originally, the town decreed that there be both school and parsonage lots west of the mile common. These lots changed hands so frequently that now it would be all but impossible to identify their exact locations.

On January 31, 1672, about a year after the assignment of the long



east and west through Fairfield, and the mile common, running north away from the village, which was a mile wide. The two formed an inverted T. On either side of the mile common and north of the half-mile common were the lands that were to be divided. The town meeting agreed that "all the Lands on both sides of the mile common necessary highways excepted shall be layd out to the Inhabitants of the Towne that hath right to devid." Each person eligible was to receive his proportionate share, and the location of his share was to be determined by the location of his home within the town. Thus, the meeting directed that the share of "widow wheler [was] to begin next to Stratford bounds and [those of] Simon Crouch [Couch] and Andrews to begin next norwocke bounds and soe the neighborhood to take it up successively inward till all have their proportions."<sup>6</sup>



lots, the town resolved to lay out a highway right of way twenty rods (330 feet) wide between the half-mile common and the long lots. This was Hull's Farm Road in Fairfield, now Long Lots Road in present-day Westport. This road, at best only a rock-strewn and rutted path, marked the line between what was for many years the occupied area of Fairfield and the area that remained a vast wilderness. One can imagine the difficulty, given the technology of the late seventeenth century, of establishing the boundaries of these ungainly long lots. Even today the job of surveying a piece of property some nine miles long through unmarked terrain would present formidable problems. So, although the original division was made in 1671, work on the surveying of these lots did not begin until 1675, when the town chose Ezbon Wakeman and Sevant Squire to perform the task, a chore not to be completed for several decades.<sup>8</sup> As late as 1682, the residents of Fairfield had, at best, only a vague idea of the southernmost bounds of the long lots. Until these bounds were established with some precision, permanent settlement could not occur in the area. In other words, although the long lots now existed, at least in the land records of Fairfield, it would be many years before Englishmen took up permanent residence in that part of Fairfield that is now Weston. In the meantime, the men and women of Fairfield, as keen as ever to accumulate real property, bought and sold land that they had never seen at a pace that would amaze their twentieth-century progeny.

*Hear followeth a List of the . . . longlots [west of the mile common] granted to the Inhabitants of the Towne [recorded in Fairfield Town Records, Town Meeting Minutes, December 30, 1681]*

	Rod	Q[arter Rod]	Foot
Jacob Gray	13	3	0
Mr. Jehu Burr	29	0	0
John Banks	28	1	0
Ezbon Wakeman	11	0	3
Tho: Skidmor	15	2	0
Steven Hedges	10	0	0
Cornelius Hull	28	0	0
Mr. John Bur	30	3	-
obadiah gilbert	28	0	-
Joshua Jennings	29	0	4
Henery Rowland	33	0	-
Joshua Knowles	20	3	0
John Cable senr	15	2	0
Richard osborn	21	1	0

Francis Bradley	22	0	6
Tho: Sherwood	24	1	0
Hump Hide	20	1	0
John Hide	15	0	0
Peter Cole	13	3	0
Peter Claphan	22	2	2
John Knowles	19	2	3
John Sturge	27	2	2
John Cable junr	18	0	-
Danll Lockwood	17	0	3
James Beers	22	2	0
Samll Smith	16	0	4
John Barlowe senr	13	3	0
John Barlowe jr	13	3	0
Eluzer Smith	10	2	0
Robt Rumsie	16	0	5
John Tomkins	8	2	0
Samll ward	16	0	0
Joseph Lockwood	21	2	0
Simon Crouch 1	20	0	0
John Andrews	11	3	0
Danll Frost	27	3	-
John green	24	0	0
Robt Beachem	20	3	1
John Wheeler	35	0	0
Henrick	7	0	3
Rich Lyon	28	2	2
Mr. Wakeman	23	3	0
Georg Squire jr	5	0	3
Parsonage	23	0	0
Scoole	11	2	0
Samll Drake	9	0	7
Danll Finch	9	0	0
Is: Sherwood	3	3	2
Samll godwin	4	0	2
Phebe Barlow	0	15	5
Nath Perry	0	3	2
Mr. Pell	-	-	-
John Bennet	9	0	2
Tho: Lyon	9	0	0
Rich ogden	26	2	0
Jos Patchin senr	6	0	2
John Smith	9	0	2
Tho: Sherwington	10	0	0
John Applegate	4	3	7
			0 <sup>9</sup>





## NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. Elizabeth Hubbell Schenck's *The History of Fairfield*, 2 volumes (New York, 1899) contains a great deal of information about Fairfield's first century, but it offers little in the way of synthesis. This is provided by two modern studies: Bruce C. Daniels, "Large Town Power Structure in Eighteenth Century Connecticut," Ph. D. thesis, University of Connecticut, 1970, and Joan R. Ballen, "Fairfield, Connecticut, 1661-1691," M.A. thesis, University of Bridgeport, 1970. Also useful is Anthony N. B. Garvan, *Architecture and Town Planning in Colonial Connecticut* (New Haven, 1951). Garvan spends several pages on Fairfield. Richard L. Bushman's important work, *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765* (Cambridge, 1967), places many of the events discussed in this chapter in the larger context of social change in the colony generally. Also helpful was Christopher Collier's thoughtful essay on "Saybrook and Lyme: Secular Settlements in a Puritan Commonwealth," in George J. Willauer, Jr., *A Lyme Miscellany* (Middletown, 1977). All of these works have been useful in the preparation of this chapter.

2. *Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut*, I, 58.
3. *Ibid.*, 25.
4. Quoted in Ballen, 107.
5. Fairfield Town Records, Town Meeting Records, I, 51.
6. *Ibid.*, 54.
7. *Ibid.*, 55.
8. *Ibid.*, 100.
9. *Ibid.*, 137, 138.



## THE PIONEERING OF WESTON

1681 / 1725

"They valued independence more  
than the advantages of life in a  
settled community"

207372

When did the first permanent settlement take place in the area that is today Weston? This is as difficult a question about Weston's history as one could ask. There are several ways to approach the issue. One would be in terms of the dates of some of the oldest houses in Weston. To accept this method, one would have to conclude that permanent settlement began in Weston in the late seventeenth century, for there is a house in Weston which, it is claimed, was built about 1695. Perhaps Englishmen were living on a permanent basis in Weston as early as the 1690s. This point of view seems to receive additional support from the fact that a log building in Easton, unfortunately demolished during the 1930s, was supposedly built about the same time.

One task that historians are particularly badly suited to perform is proving that something did not happen. A great deal of hard evidence is necessary even to cast a shadow of a doubt on some particular legend that has, over the years, developed an enthusiastic following.



Thus, it is all but impossible to prove that people were not living on a permanent basis in the Weston area by the end of the seventeenth century.

But there does exist a tremendous amount of evidence to show that significant settlement in Weston was highly unlikely before the 1730s. In fact, if one compares the evidence marshaled to prove that the old house in Weston and the log cabin in Easton were built in the seventeenth century with the evidence against permanent settlement in Weston until about 1730, he will find it difficult to accept the dates of construction assigned to these two structures. After a careful examination of Fairfield's land records, I am convinced that there was no settlement in Weston until the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century.

The division that created the original long lots was made in 1671. Even assuming that these lots were quickly surveyed, which they were not, one must recall that powerful forces held men and women in the central village of Fairfield. In the first place, by remaining in town, a person had the advantage of being able to deal collectively with a whole range of predicaments that he would have to face alone if he chose to venture into the wilderness. Many of these situations were basic to his existence. For example, who would grind his corn if he did not have access to millers in the village? Who would repair a broken tool if the blacksmith were a day's travel away? If a tanner were not available, who would mend a broken harness or prepare the hide of a recently slaughtered animal? For those of us who live in a modern age, the trip from Weston to Fairfield is nearly as easily accomplished as thought about. But for a man living at the end of the seventeenth century, the journey from what is now the center of Weston to the center of Fairfield was a more difficult one, although certainly less expensive, than today's journey by automobile from Weston to Washington, D.C., or to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Can a twentieth-century person imagine placing himself in the position of having to make a comparable journey to have an iron tool repaired or to exercise his right to vote? For a seventeenth-century man to move to Weston meant giving up his franchise unless he was willing to travel to Fairfield to participate in town meetings.<sup>1</sup>

The idea of communality, so strong in seventeenth-century villages, demanded that all the townspeople live in a small area so that they could attend public worship and be watched over by the town leaders. This arrangement allowed farmers to live in the village and conveniently walk to their fields, which were nearby. But when a Fairfield

farmer thought of putting in crops on his long lot, even on the southernmost part of it, he realized that he would have to walk several miles to his fields. He had great demands on his time. So, after receiving his proportion of the dividend in 1671, even after the lots were laid out a decade later and even after crude roads were established in the southernmost area of the long lots, yet another decade later, the farmer probably did little or nothing with his property north of the half-mile common except hold onto it for future use or sell it to, or swap it with, someone else who would also hold it for subsequent use.

When the farmer got to the point of talking of moving north of the half-mile common in order to take advantage of his property there, his wife would remind him of the consequences. To move a day's travel away meant separation from family and friends. It meant going without education for his children; it meant being cut off from the town's social life; it meant abandoning access to religious services.

All these things the farmer would realize. He also knew that he could not move beyond the half-mile common until he had cleared enough land to provide for himself and his family, and he was unwilling to begin clearing land until he was sure whose land he was clearing. Thus, he would be unwilling to improve his land until he was reasonably certain about the boundaries of his property.

Although the long lots were originally laid out in 1682, the survey was so poorly done that in March, 1706, a committee appointed by the Fairfield town meeting recommended that "the former laying out of the sd long lots should be made null and void. . . ." The town defeated this recommendation but did order that the owners of the long lots try to settle their boundaries among themselves; and that where this was impossible, the owners should submit their contending claims to a committee composed of Peter Burr, John Wakeman, John Meredeth, and John Thompson for mediation.

By 1714, the boundaries of the long lots near Long Lots Road were reasonably clear. But the delineations beyond the fronts of the lots remained very much in question. On December 27, 1714, the town meeting ordered that the boundaries be established all the way to the rear. And while the bounds of the backs of the long lots were generally measured out during the year 1726, as late as 1756 these boundaries remained unclear. On February 16, 1756, the Fairfield town meeting appointed Captain Thomas Hill "to Petition the generall assembly to appoint & enable some meet Persons to fix & Settle some Intermediate Bounds between ye Long Lots in . . . Fairfield from front to rear in Order to Render ye said Lotts more certain & to prevent Disputes. . . ."<sup>2</sup>







The General Assembly responded to this request at its May, 1756, session. It resolved that in order to put an end to the disputes between the owners of the long lots, it was authorizing the Fairfield town meeting "to appoint a committee to measure off the width of each lot the same as they are laid out at the front and rear thereof . . . and erect monuments at the extent of each lot to divide between adjoining lots." The legislature further resolved that "the bounds fixed and the lines drawn || [parallel] from the front of said lots respectively . . . to the rear of said lots shall forever hereafter be deemed and adjudged to be the true dividing line between each of said lots. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

The town meeting appointed Samuel Sherwood, Joseph Wakeman, Samuel Sturges, and Lyman Hull as a committee to carry out the General Assembly's resolution. On April 28, 1758, they completed their work. Where two or more of the original long lots were consolidated into one, the surveyors "measured the width of them as . . . one Long Lot." In order to achieve the greatest possible accuracy in measuring, the method used "was by a Rod pole, sixteen feet and a half in Length said pole being levelled on all uneven Land by a square and plumb Line. . . ." The results they ascertained, beginning at the mile of common, were as follows:

	Rods	Feet	Inches
Jacob Gray			
Moses Dimon brot into one	26	3	0
John Banks	32	4	2
John Burr	34	3	5
Obadiah Gilbert	24	10	4
Highway	4		
Esbun Wakeman			
Thos Skidmores now called Hills	44	9	0
part of Sarah Wilsons			
Stephen Hedges now called Wilsons	23	5	8
Cornelius Hills	33	15	4
John Burrs	38	8	0
Henry Rowlands	42	15	6
John Cable Senrs	30	5	0
Highway	4		
Richard Osborns	34	13	0
Joshua Knowles	31	11	11
N Perry			
Mr. Herveys now called Staples	31	12	6
Tomkins	9	14	1½
Bradleys	25	15	4½

Highway	4		
Daniel Finches	11	11	4
Thomas Sherwoods	28	10	2½
Peter Coley	15	14	9½
Old Hide	40	1	0½
John Hide one			
John Thompsons	8	1	6½
Peter Clapham	27	5	0
Goodwins	5	3	3
John Knowles	23	12	5
John Sturges	32	6	6
Highway	4		
John Cable Jnr	21	5	1
John Applegates	5	10	3
Thomas Lyons	10	10	9
Samuel Drakes	11	1	9¼
James Beers	27	1	11¾
Old Barlows	16	10	6
Saml Smiths	18	15	4
John Barlow Jnr	15	9	3
Eleuza Smith	14	6	0
Robert Rumsey	19	6	9
Daniel Lockwood			
Samuel Ward			
John Smith into one	51	15	1
Highway	4		
Richard Ogden			
Danl Frost now called Applegates	62	5	6
Joseph Lockwoods	24	15	11½
Robert Beachum	24	2	8¼
John Green	27	14	4¼

But even this did not end all controversy, for on December 31, 1761, the town once again was forced to appoint a committee "to bound out the Rear of the Long Lots as they are bounded out at the front. . . ." To point this out, however, is not to contend that settlement had to wait for the 1760s. Certainly, after the original survey of the rear of the long lots in 1726, a family could be reasonably sure that the land it cleared and upon which it built its home was indeed its own land. But until that time, a farmer would have been most foolhardy to take up permanent residence in the area of the long lots.<sup>5</sup>

A clear title was not the only condition demanded for permanent settlement. Before such settlement could be a reality, some system of roads had to tie the long lots to the rest of Fairfield. The object of this





*Saltbox house on Davis Hill Road, probably built in the middle 1700s*

system was not to provide a means of reaching the towns north of Fairfield. In fact, as late as the end of the colonial period, there were no principal thoroughfares passing through the area that is now Weston. To travel, for example, from Fairfield to Danbury in 1760 or 1770, a traveler would go from Fairfield to Stratford on the Post Road and then up to Newtown and back across to Danbury. So the roads that were needed to encourage settlement were merely small roads that would allow a farmer to travel from the center of Fairfield to his own property in the long lots.

The first upright highways—anything as elaborate as a rutted path qualified to be called a highway—were established by 1692. In that year, those roads were so impassable that the town ordered “Let [Lieutenant] Hull to take the first opportunity to call out the young men to see the highways that were layd out in the long lots [ ] to which hee is to shew to them with the front of thos Long Lotts an to renew ye bounds of thos highways...” Clearly, the so-called highways were so crude that the men were going to have a job even finding them.<sup>6</sup>

Fifteen years later, in January, 1707, the town appointed Peter Burr,

John Wakeman, John Thompson, and James Bennett “to Renew the highways Running up between the Long lotts and to survey the severall Long lotts Lying between the sd highways as Exactly as they may...” But still the matter remained unclear. In 1711, the county surveyor was asked to establish the locations of the upright highways. Not only did the issue remain unsettled, but in 1714 a town committee, again including the familiar names of Cornelius Hull, John Thompson, and John Wakeman, took on the task of determining where the upright highways should be. They reported that the seventh through the twelfth uprights should be located west of the mile of common. These were:

7th. An highway between Obe’h Gilbert Sen. & Esbond Wakeman’s long lot, four rods in breadth be it more or less.

8th. An highway between John Cabel, Sr., & Richard Osborn’s long lot, six rods in breadth at the front, & at some distance from the front upward four rods in breadth.

9th. An highway between Francis Bradley & Nathaniel Finche’s long lot, four rod in breadth be it more or less.

10th. An highway between John Sturges Sen., & John Cabel jun. long lots, four rods in breadth, be it more or less.

11th. An highway between Eleazer Smith & Robt. Rumsie’s long lots, four rod in breadth, be it more or less.

12th. An highway running near the road beyond Machamux which goes to Saugatuck, bounded on the east with the long lot of Simon Couch, & on the west with Norwalk line, the south east side hath at the front a great oak tree between the said Couch, & said highway with an heap of stones.”<sup>7</sup>

But an exasperated town meeting decided in 1738 that the issue was still confused and formed a committee “to clear the highways that run between the Long Lotts...” It seems safe to assume that until about the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the upright highways existed only in the southernmost part of the area north of the half-mile common and in the minds of Fairfield’s town fathers. Remembering that the long lots began at Long Lots Road, well south of the present boundary of Weston, it seems unimaginable that permanent settlement could have existed in Weston before 1725. The tasks of hauling in the contents of a house and of maintaining even the barest communication with Fairfield could hardly have been accomplished before this date.<sup>8</sup>

A look at a modern map of Weston provides a clue to the location of the upright highways. The westernmost north-south—actually







north-northwest by south-southeast—road ran along the Fairfield-Norwalk boundary. What remains of it today is called Cavalry Road or Wampum Hill Road. The second upright highway, taking these roads from the Norwalk line to the mile of common, was a highway that ran on the west side of Applegate's—at other times Ogden's and Frost's—long lot and was referred to as Applegate's Highway. It is the present Weston Road and Georgetown Road. The third upright highway ran between the Cable, also Wakeman, and Sturgis long lots. It is now North Avenue, Kettle Creek Road, and Old Hyde Road. Between the Finch and Bradley long lots was the fourth upright highway, now called White Birch Road and Good Hill Road. The fifth upright was between the Osborn and Cable long lots and is now Fanton Hill Road. The sixth, nearest the mile of common, was between Wakeman's and Gilbert's long lots and was called Gilbert's Highway. It is now Eleven O'Clock Road and Davis Hill Road.

In addition to the upright highways, running north and south, a system of cross highways, running east and west, was necessary for people to be able to reach conveniently all sections of their long lots. In December, 1734, the town voted that Samuel Sherwood and John Andrews "open the Twenty rod highways on the West side of the Mile Comon. . . ." Little progress was made on the project, so in February, 1746, a new committee was formed by the town and ordered to lay out the highways. At the same time, the town voted to reduce the width of the highways from twenty rods to six rods.<sup>9</sup>

Ultimately, Samuel Sherwood, Daniel Bradley, and Thomas Hill established the cross highways in the area west of the mile of common, but they did not complete their work until 1758. The first cross highway was located in what is today Westport, and is now called Cross Highway. The second was what is presently Coleytown Road and Catamount Road, although the Catamount section was subsequently exchanged for land that ran along the Aspetuck and followed today's Route 136. The third began at the home of David Godfrey, which was located at what was then the Fairfield-Norwalk town line, now the Weston-Wilton line. It followed what is presently Broad Street to Good Hill to Cartbridge Road to Lyons Plains Road. An extra cross highway was put in south of the intersection of Cartbridge and Lyons Plains Road. This is now the Old Easton Turnpike. The fourth cross highway was located four and a half miles from the front of the long lots and corresponded to what is today Norfield Road and Steep Hill Road. The present Lords Highway was the fifth, and Godfrey Road the sixth. The seventh and final cross highway was located



*Once a tavern, this house on Gifford's Hill dates from the eighteenth century.*

in the Redding parish, then a part of Fairfield but soon to become a separate town, in 1767.

Certainly, permanent settlement in the Weston area did not have to await the completion of the cross highways in 1758. But it is certain also that settlement had not existed long in this region before demands for a cross-highway system would have been heard. Because this problem first received the town's attention in 1734, it is likely that settlement began shortly before this date. Thus, evidence gleaned from the development of the upright highways tends to confirm that settlement first took place in Weston about 1725.

This conclusion is further substantiated by the Fairfield land records. A careful search of these records failed to uncover a single reference to a dwelling house in the area that is now Weston until the 1740s. Recognizing that a person would be unlikely to build a home only to sell it in a few years, one could still expect, however, a record of the transfer of such property within a decade or two. Thus, the land records also seem to confirm the judgment that permanent settlement waited until about 1725.

Probably those Englishmen who first lived in Weston did so on a part-time basis. As land became scarce in that part of Fairfield close to





the village—the area, as has been seen, where most persons preferred to live—farmers would be forced to travel farther and farther from home to obtain lands for crops or livestock. Eventually, these farmers would be spending so much time walking that they would lose a good part of each day. They might also be making this walk to cut firewood, or logs to be hewn into beams or sawed into lumber. Because Weston was blessed with large stands of chestnut trees, which were highly valued by colonial carpenters, and because a sawmill was established in 1704 on the Aspetuck near what is now Redding Road, probably the Weston region was initially of interest to loggers.

But whether herders or farmers or lumbermen, the first Englishmen to spend any large period of time in the Weston area did so for a few weeks at a stretch, perhaps for a few months. They lived in crude shelters that could be constructed easily and that offered few of the comforts of home. As rough as these shelters were, they were not log cabins; for the concept of a dwelling, even a hut, constructed of logs was unknown in early eighteenth-century New England.<sup>10</sup>

Eventually, some of those who dwelt temporarily in Weston decided to make the traumatic move, decided to leave friends and family and meetinghouse and schools and whatever conveniences they had known, to become “outliers.” Those who moved out tended to be less well-to-do than those who remained behind. If one owned sufficient land in town to provide for himself and his family, he would have little reason to leave. The land near the town’s center was also more valuable than that off in the wilderness. Those who moved to Weston were also different from most Fairfield people in another respect: They valued lumber or cattle or land or possibly independence more than they did the advantages of life in a settled community. They moved because they did not want to walk for an hour or two or three each day to the sites of their work. But the typical Fairfield man or woman of 1725 or 1735 found other means of dealing with this inconvenience. Those who left were the exceptions.

But eventually, some were forced to leave. Fairfield became crowded. The population grew. Greater and greater demands were placed on a constant supply of land. Younger sons found themselves heirs to land away from the town’s center. Poorer men were unable to afford the prices of land in town. These sorts of individuals were crowded out and found new homes in areas like that which would become Weston.

By 1725, then, there was a permanent settlement in Weston. The population of the area undoubtedly grew slowly at first. Again, judg-



*The Weston Road about 1910, looking up Gifford's Hill*

ing from the land records, more persons moved into Weston between 1750 and 1756, when it became a parish, than from the beginnings of settlement until 1750. Between 1756 and 1776, the population increased approximately three times. In 1756, the population of Weston—that is: the Norfield Parish, as it was then known—was approximately 350 persons. By 1770, that number had increased to about 875, and by 1776, to almost 1,000. Until the completion of the Merritt Parkway in 1940, Weston would never again experience such a tremendous increase in population.

The population of the future Weston was not evenly divided throughout the area. In what is now southwestern Weston was an area known as the Oblong or Albany. Here, about 1750, lived, among others, **David Godfrey**, **Nathan Gray**, and **John Lockwood**. Close by, in what is today Westport and Wilton, were other families, giving this area a sufficient population to have a school by 1744. About this same time, in the Fanton Hill and Lyons Plains section of Weston lived several families, including those of Ebenezer Thorp, Peter Thorp, Thomas Treadwell, John Lyon, Joseph Banks, and John Fanton. Around what is today the center of Weston were the homes of **Nathan Morehouse**, **Nathan Gray**, and **Benjamin Dean**. One of the busiest areas in Weston in the mid-eighteenth century was the area in the extreme northeast, at what is today the northern end of the Newtown Turnpike. In this area lived Peter Bulkey, Shubal Gorham, and John Rowland. This area was close to Redding, a section of Fairfield that developed much earlier than Norfield did. Redding became a separate parish twenty years before Norfield did and a separate town twenty years before Weston did.

It was many decades after the land division of 1671 before people

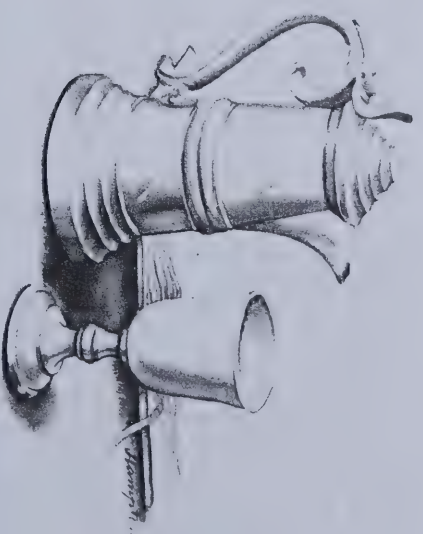
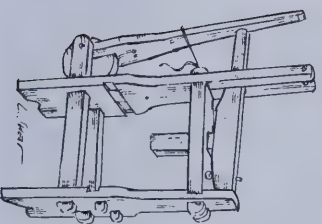




moved into the future Weston. But once the process started, its momentum grew until the area's population was nearly as great as it could bear. Once the population had arrived, the people of the area began to think of themselves as separate from Fairfield. Ties to the old community began breaking down; a new sense of community was developing.

#### NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. My reading of Richard L. Bushman's *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1795* (Cambridge, 1967) and Kenneth A. Lockridge's, *A New England Town, The First Hundred Years: Dedham, Massachusetts, 1636-1736* (New York, 1970) was of great help in writing this chapter.
2. Fairfield Town Records, Town Meeting Minutes, II, 378, 397; III, 496.
3. *Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut*, X, 512.
4. Fairfield Town Records, Land Records, XIV, 554-557.
5. Fairfield Town Records, Town Meeting Minutes, III, 509.
6. *Ibid.*, II, 239.
7. *Ibid.*, 377, 388; Elizabeth Hubbell Schenck, *The History of Fairfield*, 2 volumes (New York, 1889), II, 37-38.
8. Fairfield Town Records, Town Meeting Minutes, III, 469.
9. *Ibid.*, 465, 480.
10. Harold R. Shurtleff's *The Log Cabin Myth: A Study of the Early Dwellings of the English Colonists in North America* (Cambridge, 1939) proves that eighteenth-century New Englanders did not use log cabins as dwellings. J. Frederick Kelly unsuccessfully challenged Shurtleff's thesis in an article in *Oldtime New England: Bulletin of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities* XXXI (October, 1940), 28-41. In fact, what Kelly was attempting to do was to justify certain errors that Shurtleff had discovered in his previous work, *Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut* (New Haven, 1927). See Shurtleff, pp. 206-207.



### NORFIELD BECOMES A PARISH 1725 / 1783

"To walk together in Brotherly  
love & Christian Communion"

Permanent settlement in the Weston area began about 1725. Twenty-five or thirty years would pass before the region had developed a strong sense both of being separate and different from Fairfield and of being a community in its own right. The sense of being different from Fairfield came earlier and more easily to the outlanders than did a sense of their own community, but eventually both ideas profoundly influenced the area's development.

Some of the factors that encouraged individuals to move to the back country also prompted them to think of themselves as different from the neighbors they left behind. A sense of being different arose when younger sons were forced out of town onto the marginal lands and saw the relative advantages which their older brothers enjoyed by merely being in town. Likewise, when poor newcomers to town also found themselves shunted out to these same lands, they were aware of the benefits of membership in an old family that held land in the village. In both cases—younger sons or poor newcomers—the relative poverty of the outlying areas as compared to the parent town was apparent.







*The present Norfield Congregational Church, dedicated in 1831*

Homogeneity had once existed within the old village; now that homogeneity was a thing of the past, the outlivers were not the equals of those in town, and—even more important—the outlivers realized this.

It took only a short time for tensions to develop between those who did move out of town and those who stayed behind. Controversies could arise over hundreds of small concerns. Would the town be willing to spend money from its treasury to build roads in the hinterland? It would not, if the people in the central part of town had their way, and they usually did, because they outnumbered the outlivers. Would the town be willing to establish new schools in these areas? Again, the interests of the outlivers and of the townspeople ran counter.

Out of these differences, a sense of “us against them” developed among the outlivers. This was easily encouraged, because within the outlying area the population was amazingly homogeneous. The means by which one man sustained himself and his family were the same means used by his neighbors. To be sure, some of the outlivers were wealthier than others, but the distance between the wealthiest and the poorest was hardly significant, and social distance was nonexistent. The economic and social distances that separated outlivers from townspeople were more real and, therefore, more significant.

The greatest deterrent to this sense of “us against them” was the continued dependence of the outlivers on the town. Initially, at least, the outlivers were constantly dependent upon the services the town could provide. The craftsmen and artisans were in town. So were the merchants and the schools. But gradually the outlivers became more and more self-sufficient. The process of becoming self-sufficient was largely accidental and certainly not self-conscious. It happened like this: A farmer might discover that he had a knack for working with leather and so would abandon his plow temporarily to make or mend harnesses or boots for his neighbors; eventually, so many neighbors would call upon him for help that he would forsake his plow and become a tanner. Another man might discover that his talent was in working with iron. He could have begun by building or repairing iron items for himself, but if he was a reasonable craftsman—he did not have to be expert, for he had little competition—his neighbors would bring their work to him. Soon the outlivers would have in their midst not only a tanner but also a blacksmith, men whose roles in the nascent community were absolutely essential.

In addition to the benefits provided by craftsmen, the outlivers also





needed the services that could be offered only by millers. As long as they had to rely upon the mills in Fairfield, the outlivers could not even pretend to be self-sufficient. So mills were built in what is now Weston, where water power was abundant. A sawmill had existed on the Aspetuck as early as 1704. James Davis's sawmill was located where the fourth cross highway entered the mile of common. Possibly as early as 1767, Nathaniel Squier began operating a mill on Godfrey Pond. This was primarily a sawmill but was able to perform other tasks as well. Squier subsequently sold the mill to Jonathan and Sillman Godfrey, who vastly expanded its operation. From an early date, David Coley ran a mill at what is now the bridge on River Road. This mill also performed a variety of tasks for local residents.

As outlivers began to provide more and more of their own needs, they came to think of themselves as a distinct community. This feeling developed slowly, but after Englishmen had lived together in this section of hinterland for twenty-five or thirty years, they possessed a strong sense of their own community, a sense expressed at different times and in different ways. In 1744, the residents of the Oblong insisted that they be given the right to establish their own school. This was hardly a radical request and was easily accepted by those who lived in the settled part of Fairfield. But it was the beginning of greater and greater demands for autonomy. Within a dozen years, the outlivers would request the privilege of forming their own ecclesiastical society.<sup>1</sup>

An ecclesiastical society in mid-eighteenth-century Connecticut corresponded roughly to an English parish. Its origins were ecclesiastical, but by this time it had also become a political body. In its role as a political body, it was referred to as a parish and performed numerous functions. It built and maintained the meetinghouse, hired and paid the minister. It had the power to levy a "society rate"—a tax which it used to pay the minister and meet its other financial obligations. It had charge of the schools in its district; these were financed by student fees and by a special school rate. In order to accomplish all these duties, the society elected a slate of officers. Of these, the most important were the committeemen; they were the executive and administrative agents of the society. The society also elected a clerk, a treasurer, and a rate collector.

In addition to the creation of a parish, the establishment of a society also meant the installation of a church. The parish and the church, however, were not the same. The church dealt with matters of theology, the covenant, church membership, and church discipline. The

church meetings were limited to church members—those who adhered to the covenant—and so were much smaller than parish meetings. To participate in parish meetings, a person had to be either a freeman—that is: eligible to vote in elections for the General Assembly—or a full communicant of the church. The General Assembly had authority over ecclesiastical societies and was the only agency empowered to authorize the formation of new societies. In 1650 and 1658, the legislature had granted itself this exclusive power. By a 1728 law, the Assembly enabled the societies to carry out their various functions.

The outlivers saw many opportunities for themselves in the formation of new societies. Generally, the leaders of the town and of the existing society were men who lived in the central village. These were men who had easy access to parish and town meetings. The outlivers, on the other hand, had trouble getting to these meetings and so played a much less important role in them. But when a new society was formed in an outlying area, the outlivers would be the ones to take up the new positions and, therefore, to begin to have more control over their own affairs. They could then become leaders, themselves.

The men who eventually requested the creation of a new ecclesiastical society in the Weston area were more concerned with exercising additional control over their own lives and with projecting themselves into positions of leadership than they were with religious matters. For these men, unlike Roger Ludlow and the other founders of Fairfield, were not Puritans; they were Yankees. For example, most of them would become members of the church that they formed, but they, unlike their ancestors from the previous century, no longer regarded the church as an agency of social control. By the 1750s, the church in Connecticut was so racked by theological disputes that it failed to speak with one voice and had lost the authority it had once enjoyed. The church no longer set the moral or intellectual tone of the colony.

The decline of church influence meant that the men who lived in the Weston area in the 1750s were guided by other examples. Whereas the active pursuit of riches had been at least partly condemned during the age of Ludlow, it was an accepted way of life by the 1750s. The men who would soon call for the new society were men who were very much aware of the main chance. After all, many had given up the benefits of living in a settled community to seek their fortunes as outlivers.

Cupidity was only one of many impulses that men of the 1750s could







*The interior of the Norfield church*

acknowledge but which men of the previous century had been compelled to hide. They could acknowledge that they were more concerned with their own independence and liberty than they were with the benefits of social order. The Puritan generation had valued order above all social virtues. The generation of 1750 was less willing to sacrifice its own liberties for the sake of order and more likely to interpret pronouncements supporting law and authority as oppressive. The men who would found the new ecclesiastical society in Weston had traveled a great distance from the seventeenth century. They had physically forsaken the village established by Ludlow; but even more, they had abandoned many of his ideas.<sup>2</sup>

The initial step in the move for a new society came in 1755. In that year, inhabitants of northwestern Fairfield petitioned the General Assembly for the privilege to hold back one-fourth of their parish rates in order to use this money to have their own minister during the three stormiest months of winter. The petitioners claimed that they were so far from the meetinghouse that travel back and forth in the winter was nearly impossible. The men who made this petition were members of the Green's Farms parish, a society which had itself broken from the

original society in Fairfield. That part of Fairfield that eventually became Weston was, in fact, frequently referred to as the northern part of Green's Farms. The 1755 petition was granted, and for three months the Weston area had its own minister.

But this was just the beginning of the area's petitions. Being less interested in religion than in politics, local leaders planned, in 1756, to request the authority to become a separate society. Generally, the Assembly required that a settlement have fifty or sixty families and estates that were valued at £4,000 before the area could qualify to become a parish. The settlement in the northern part of Green's Farms had slightly fewer than fifty families, and its list of real property totaled only £3,500, but the residents prepared their petition nevertheless.

The petition that was finally sent to the General Assembly was drafted by persons from the northern part of the Green's Farms Society, the northwestern part of the Greenfield Society—also in Fairfield—and a small part of the Wilton Society, which was then in Norwalk. In fact, the principal name on the petition was that of Cornelius Dike-man, who lived in Wilton. The petition stated that the residents of this area lived a great distance from their places of worship and that they had the ability to support a minister. The petition, dated October, 1756, was referred to a committee of the General Assembly for review. Jonathan Maltbee, of Stamford, and John Read and Samuel Olmsted, of Fairfield, considered the appeal and reported back to the legislature the following May. Typically, the Green's Farms Society opposed the creation of the new society. Its creation would mean a loss of taxes, thus raising the proportionate share of those who remained in the old society. In this case, a new society would mean the loss of approximately one-third of the assessed list of the Green's Farms Society. The old society's opposition failed to influence Maltbee, Read, or Olmsted, and they recommended the creation of the new society. The General Assembly agreed with the committee's findings and in May, 1757, created the Norfield Society. Finally, that part of Fairfield that would eventually become Weston had a name of its own.

The boundaries of the Norfield Society were different from the boundaries of modern Weston. The northern and western limits of the society were essentially the same as those of today. The southern boundary was so located that the Aspetuck River was included within the society, and the eastern boundary was different in that the society extended only as far east as today's Eleven O'Clock Road and Davis Hill Road. Thus, the society continued considerably farther south





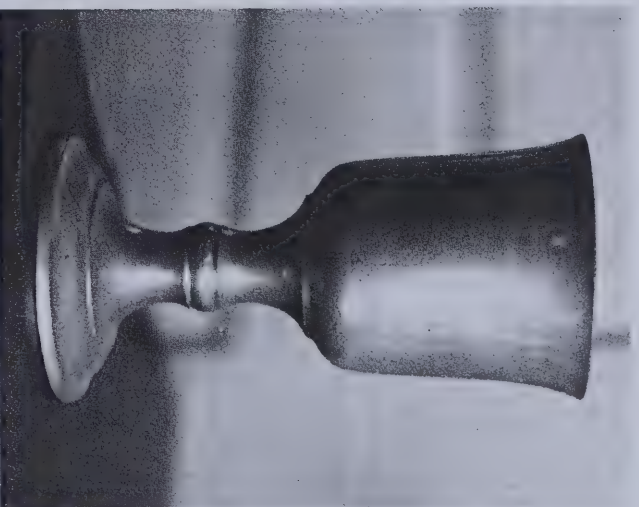
than modern Weston does but stopped short of the present town's eastern boundary.

These boundaries were soon changed, however. In October, 1757, the eastern line was moved further east to where Old Stage Coach Road is now found. This was the western boundary of the mile of common. Likewise, in May, 1760, the southern boundary was slightly altered to allow Asabel Raymond, Jr., of Norwalk to associate with the Norfield Society. John Cable, James Davis, and Daniel Morehouse also joined the new society after the boundary adjustment of October, 1757.

The first meeting of the Norfield parish assembled on June 23, 1757. David Coley, Nathan Morris, and David Godfrey summoned the meeting. The initial order of business was the election of a moderator. Nathan Squier was selected. The meeting then elected David Andrews as clerk and David Coley, David Adams, and John Lyon as committeemen. The meeting instructed the committeemen to "call the west parish of farefield [Green's Farms] and Greenfield to account for oure Rite [share] in the overplus mony and parsanage mony and scool mony, and our Rite in the meating house and othere things that they shall think proper." Whether Norfield was able to collect its share from the other parishes remains a mystery. If it did, the clerk never bothered to make note of this in the parish records. The final order of business at the first meeting was to summon Samuel Sherwood "to preach with us upon probation."<sup>3</sup>

At the next meeting of the parish, the question of Sherwood's settling in Norfield was again discussed. The parish decided to offer him "fifty pound lawful money, for the first three years, from this dat, July the fourth Day, 1757. At the end of three years to give him Sixty pound a Yeare annually..." David Coley, John Lyon, and David Bulkley agreed to meet with Sherwood and invite him to come to Norfield.<sup>4</sup>

The three men convinced Sherwood to take charge of the new church, and his ordination was scheduled for August 16, 1757. Representatives, both ministers and laymen, were present from area churches to participate in the ceremony conducted under the auspices of the Council of the Western District of Fairfield County. The ceremony opened when the Norfield committeemen appeared and produced a copy of the act of the General Assembly creating the Norfield Society. They also displayed "a Copy of the Votes of the People chusing Mr. Samuel Sherwood to settle among them in the work of the Gospel Ministry..." Sherwood then came forward and announced



*Old pewter Communion cup of the Norfield church*

his acceptance of the society's offer and presented himself for examination. The Council questioned him "as to his Experimental Acquaintance with Religion, his views in undertaking the Work of the Ministry, his Principals & his thoughts, and approbation of the Saybrook Platform\* and Confession of Faith..." The Council was "all well Satisfied with him, and unanimously and cheerfully agreed to proceed in his Ordination." At this point, the ordination process was adjourned until seven the next morning.<sup>5</sup>

In the morning, visiting clergymen offered prayers, the charge, and a sermon. Then local residents who were members of existing churches presented themselves for membership in the Norfield church. They, "having been admitted to Communion with Churches professing the Doctrine and practising the Discipline agreed upon by the General Consociation of the Churches of Connecticut at their Meeting in Saybrook 1746 and being inhabitants of the Parish of Norfield," agreed "to become a particular Church, as the Constitution aforsd. and covenant with each other to walk together in Brotherly

\*The Saybrook Platform established a system of government for the churches of Connecticut.



love & Christian Communion as becomes brethren....” Those who signed this covenant were Samuel Sherwood, Samuel Lyon, Thomas Whitlock, Thomas Pike, David Bulkey, Nathan Gray, John Rowland, David Coley, David Godfrey, Shubal Gorham, Michael Dunning, and John Meaker. The church was then proclaimed to be one of the Con-sociation churches, and the ordination was concluded.<sup>6</sup>

During the next month, several other persons became church members, bringing the membership to sixty-two. Of these sixty-two, forty-three had belonged to the Green’s Farms Society, fifteen at Greenfield, two at Wilton; the affiliations of two others were not disclosed. The former members of the Greenfield church lived in the Lyons Plains area and included Samuel Lyon, James Lyon, John Lyon, Peter Thorp, James Davis, Joseph Davis, John Meaker, Thomas Pike, and John Cable. Those from Green’s Farms lived in the western and northern parts of Norfield.

Samuel Sherwood was the most important member of the new church. The second son of Samuel Sherwood, of Green’s Farms, he was born on February 10, 1730. His mother, Jane Burr, was the sister of the Reverend Aaron Burr, the president of the College of New Jersey (later Princeton), who was the father of the more famous Aaron Burr. After graduating from Yale in 1749, Sherwood moved to New Jersey to become a tutor at his uncle’s college. While he was there, he studied theology with Burr, and on July 23, 1751, was licensed to preach by the Western Association of Fairfield County. But he shortly left Connecticut to spend another year in New Jersey. He did eventually return to Connecticut to assume the pastoral duties at Stratfield parish, now Bridgeport, and later at Kensington, part of what is presently Berlin. From Kensington, Sherwood went to Norfield, where he remained the rest of his life. He died on May 25, 1783, leaving a substantial estate that included two slaves.

From the few sermons of Sherwood that have survived to the twentieth century, it is possible to develop a general picture of Norfield’s first minister’s theology. Sherwood believed that the single greatest duty that God required of man was “to repent and be converted and sincerely believe in his Son Jesus Christ.” Where this was not done, he contended, nothing of good could ever be accomplished. Even if a man is “externally regular and civil in life” but has not been “born again,” he cannot hope to escape God’s “Wrath and Vengeance.” Unless a man was converted, unless he discovered a new heart and a new life, he “must then be cast into Hell . . . and be eternally confined to that awful Place of Torments where there is everlasting weeping

and wailing and gnashing of Teeth.”

This is the message that Sherwood presented over and over again. Jesus, he preached, was “able to heal the Souls of men of that dreadful Disease of Sin,” and sin is the most dangerous of all diseases for it renders men “vile and abominable in the Sight of the blessed and glorious God” and must, therefore, expose the sinner to God’s “Dis-pleasure and Wrath.” But through Jesus it is possible to be cleansed of sin and so allowed to glorify God by being pure of heart.<sup>8</sup>

The advice that Sherwood offered was full of warnings. Life is a period of probation, he contended, a time when a man must prove his worthiness to God. In fact, life “is the only Season in which you can do good for yourself or others. It is the only Season in which you can prepare for your eternal State.” Death, on the other hand, “fixes your eternal State. If you are unprepared when it meets you, you must remain so forever.” His sermons were admonitions about the sinfulness of man, admonitions about the wrath of God, admonitions about “an Eternity of Misery in Hell.” The single hope was Jesus Christ; his love was the only sunshine in the otherwise gloomy picture painted by Sherwood for his congregation. From 1757 until 1783, he warned the unholy of their fate.<sup>9</sup>

The arrival of Sherwood in Norfield meant that the new society needed a meetinghouse. On October 30, 1757, the parish voted to build “a meeting house for Divine worship” and appealed to the County Court\* in Fairfield “to set a Stake and fix a Spot for us to erect a meeting house.” Because the location of the meetinghouse would determine the location of the town’s center and because it would also significantly affect the values of property in the area, the question of locating the meetinghouse was too delicate to be left up to the parish members. Thus, the parish took the question to the County Court and hoped to find objective justice there.<sup>10</sup>

Apparently, the County Court selected a location either later that autumn or during the following spring. In May, 1758, additional plans for the meetinghouse were considered by the parish meeting. At the meeting of May 10, the voters debated “whether or no we wold Build a meeting house forty feate long and thirty feate wide and nineteen feate posts.” The meeting approved this plan and then decided to begin work as soon as possible “and Raise it and Cover it, thro Dawn the floore and put in the glass, By next December A.D. 1758.” The

\*Connecticut’s judicial system was organized by counties at this time, the Fairfield County Court sitting in Fairfield.







building committee was then ordered to "persead and Lay under pinin . . . in the new place perposed."<sup>11</sup>

In September, after considerable work should have been completed, the parish voted to raise the projected building "upon generosity." The failure of the parish to decide how to finance the construction until September seems to indicate that work had not proceeded according to the schedule of the previous May. Apparently, the site selected by the County Court was unsatisfactory to large numbers of Norfield residents. So, on September 27, 1758, representatives of the County Court chose a new location for the building. The meeting then directed the building committee to transport the partly completed frame of the meetinghouse from the old to the new location. Either the two sites were close to each other or else little work had been accomplished. At any rate, the first meetinghouse was finally to be built on land that had belonged to John Gilbert, Jr. The site was located near the present intersection of Norfield Road and Old Hyde Road.

By December, 1758, the building committee, which consisted of David Coley, David Bulkey, and John Cable, had completed the frame. Financed by a tax of threepence per pound of assessed property, the meetinghouse, the meeting decided, was to be shingled "all over." The meeting also voted to hire David Coley, Jr., for one month to lay the floors and case the "winders" of the structure.<sup>12</sup>

Exactly when work on the meetinghouse stopped would be difficult to determine. In August, 1760, the meeting voted to build a pulpit and place seats on the lower floor. The voters, at the same time, appointed Daniel Andrews, Humphrey Ogden, and John Lyon "a committee to mark out fifteen pines in the meeting house on the Loer flore to the Inhabitants of the Society of Norfield, according to their highest Lists [assessments] in the Year 1760. . . ." David Coley, David Adams, and Ebenezer Squire had the task of constructing the remainder of the seats on the lower floor and of finishing the pulpit.<sup>13</sup>

This work was not finished quickly. In February of 1761, the parish meeting decided that each person who wanted a pew should pay the cost of having it built and also should "Pay his full perposion of Cost according to his List towards building the pulpit and seats in the meeting house." After this entry in the parish minutes, several years passed before the problem of the meetinghouse was again discussed. But in 1774, the parish again took up the question. From these discussions, it is clear that the building was never completed. In February, 1774, the meeting appointed Ebenezer Squire, Daniel Andrews, and

Daniel Duncan to receive subscriptions of money "& of all others that may be subscribed in woork or metetels that is wanting to repair s house. . . ." The building continued to be used, but it must have been crude affair, at best.<sup>14</sup>

On November, 1778, the Norfield Society voted to "put a rof on th meeting house & git bords & thro Down on the Galary flores & mak one paire of galary Chamber Staires. . . ." during the following year Apparently, the gallery remained unfinished and could be reached only with the assistance of a ladder. What the exact condition of the building was as late as 1783 is something of a mystery, for in August of that year, the meeting agreed to the following enigmatic resolution "Voted that we will repaire the meeting house as it now stans on th Sils." This brief entry was clear only to those who attended that parish meeting. But what is obvious is that Norfield's first meetinghouse was hardly an architectural delight. Perhaps this lack of concern over temporal structure was in keeping with the theology of the Reverend Sherwood, who told his flock that their thoughts should be with the life hereafter, or perhaps it indicated a general indifference to church affairs.<sup>15</sup>

The parish had other concerns besides building and maintaining meetinghouse. It had taxes to collect. The first tax levied by the new society was a tax of four pence on the pound. Jeremiah Sturges was the collector, and he received twenty shillings for his task. The society was also charged with responsibility for the schools. David Coley, Humphrey Ogden, and David Adams collected the school tax and divide the moneys collected among the three school districts. These first districts were located at Lyons Plains, at the center of Norfield, and at the Oblong (Kettle Creek). John Cable was the school committeeman for the Lyons Plains (actually called Lyons Woods) district, Humphrey Ogden for the central district (called the Cross Highway), and Nathaniel Morris for the Oblong. Related to the task of operating the schools was the job of attempting to recover part of the money that the Norfield inhabitants had previously paid to the Green's Farms Society for schools. The Norfield parish appointed Daniel Andrews as an agent to press this matter. Typically, the parish clerk neglected to record whether or not he was successful.

During the early years of the parish, the schools were in session for six months of the year. This is not to say that each of the schools operated for half the year; rather, each of the three schools was in session for two months, allowing the parish to claim that it provided a total of six months of education. The responsibility of paying the







*The Emmanuel Episcopal Church,  
completed in 1846*

*The Forging of a Connecticut Town / 60*

school expenses for each year was shared by the parish and the parents of the students. As the parish minister stated, "What the School Mony. Dont pay shall be paid by the Scholers, each School shall have their money according to their List"—that is: according to the percentage of taxes paid by a given district of the parish into the school fund.<sup>16</sup>

Just as Norfield's population generally was growing rapidly during the 1750s and 1760s, so also was its school population. The three schools that had existed in 1757 had become five by 1769. There is no way to determine if the two new schools were as large as the three original ones, but given the tightfisted attitude of the parish leaders they were unlikely to expand the school system unless there was no way to avoid it. Clearly, the Norfield parish was a growing concern.

But if the parish was a success, there is reason to believe that the Norfield church had, by the beginning of the American Revolution already begun to languish. Perhaps this was to be expected, given the nature of Norfield's population. After all, the earliest Norfield settler had been willing to leave meetinghouses far behind when they departed for the wilderness. Also, the growing excitement over the differences between Great Britain and her American colonies had diverted attention from religious issues during the 1760s and 1770s. These factors, combined with the general malaise the established church was suffering in Connecticut during these same decades meant that the new church was founded at a most unpropitious time. The failure of Norfield parish even to finish its first meetinghouse is some indication of its priorities.

By the autumn of 1774, the church's position had eroded so badly that a special church meeting was assembled to deal with the problem. The meeting, after a lengthy discussion, reached a set of six conclusions. First, the meeting decided that all baptized persons are "under the Watch & Care of the Church and Subject to its Discipline." In the second place, the special assembly resolved that all church members should be urged to attend communion services. Next, the meeting urged that all children from twelve to fourteen years old be required "to attend Catechetical Lectures till they take upon them bond of the Covenant." The fourth resolution called for the establishment of a Committee of Enquiry, Inspection, and Information. The committee was composed of David Coley, Daniel Andrews, Shubal Gorham, Nehemiah Beers, David Godfrey, Eleazer Godfrey, and Ephraim Lyon. Its function, according to the fifth resolution, was "to give a full information of the true State of our Ecclesiastical Society with regard to the religious & moral Conduct of its Members, particularly as to





their attending public Worship, Family Religion & Gospel ordinances with a view to assist and bring forward in gentle & Gospel Method, all delinquents to the practice of their Duty." The final resolution simply called for this committee to meet with the Reverend Sherwood to decide upon how it should function. Unfortunately for the church, during the final nine years of Sherwood's tenure, there occurred no great rebirth of religious fervor in Norfield. In fact, the political issues of these years continued to divert the inhabitants' attention.<sup>17</sup>

The Reverend Sherwood probably was more responsible for igniting Norfield to the cause of the American Revolution than anyone else in the parish. Certainly there was no more zealous patriot in Norfield. He, in fact, was more than just a zealot. He wrote several pieces supporting the patriot cause that were both well argued and widely read. As might be expected, these pieces, subsequently published, were originally sermons. One of his most important was a sermon delivered in Norfield on August 31, 1774, and later printed in New Haven. This sermon was written in response to the Intolerable Acts, a series of laws passed by the British Parliament and designed to punish Massachusetts in general and Boston in particular for allowing the Boston Tea Party to occur. Sherwood began his dissertation by reminding his readers that "there is but one general distinction that is of essential importance in the cause now depending, and that is to be made by drawing the dividing line between the true friends to the rights of humanity,—our dear country, and constitutional liberties and privileges, civil and religious: And the base, traitorous and perfidious enemies thereto." The issue was clearly joined in Sherwood's mind. He warned his readers that they were "threatened with being deprived of all our civil privileges, and brought under a most cruel, arbitrary and tyrannical kind of government." The only way to avoid such a disastrous plight was for all "to unite our hearts and hands with all lovers of the rights of humanity, in upholding and defending this most valuable and important interest." There was no question about where Sherwood stood on the political questions of his time.<sup>18</sup>

The Norfield minister's most famous sermon in behalf of the revolutionary cause was entitled "The Church's Flight into the Wilderness." The sermon, delivered January 17, 1776, was dedicated to John Hancock and the other members of the Continental Congress and to the "patriotic Heroes, who are spirited by Heaven to exert their superior abilities . . . for the defense of our distressed country, bleeding under the cruel and murderous hand of unexampled tyranny and oppression. . . ." In this sermon, Sherwood sought to prove that Great

Britain was a conscious agent of the devil's plan to destroy the "glory and prosperity of Christ's church." But this scheme is bound to fail, he assured his audience, for "it will soon be said and acknowledged, that the kingdoms of this world, are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ." Six months before the Declaration of Independence, Sherwood was calling for a separation from the mother country.<sup>19</sup>

Once independence was declared and it became clear that the issues between the colonies and England were too real to be talked out of existence, Sherwood gave his full support to the war. He argued "that a just defensive War is not forbidden but may be fully justified from the Scriptures. . . ." Now is the time, he warned, "to exert ourselves for our common Safety and Defense before the Destruction actually occurs." In Samuel Sherwood, Norfield had its greatest patriot.<sup>20</sup>

In general, the Norfield parish agreed with its minister about the virtues of the American cause. Likewise, the town of Fairfield, of which Norfield was obviously still a part, was a staunch Whig—that is: patriot—town throughout the Revolution. In September, 1774, it established a committee to aid the people of Boston, who were then suffering under the effects of the Intolerable Acts. Serving on this committee were Ephraim Lyon, John S. Andrews, Hezekiah Bradley, Daniel Andrews, and Humphrey Ogden, all of Norfield. The people of Fairfield contributed 634 bushels of rye and 116 bushels of wheat to the relief of Boston. In December of the same year, the town meeting voted to support the economic boycott of British goods established by the Continental Congress and agreed that "if any Person or Persons shall directly or indirectly with intent to diswade disunite or otherwise prevent us from strictly complying with and conforming to said Agreement & association Publish Vend or Sell or otherwise dispose of any Books Pamphlets or publications in this Town directly tending thereto," such persons were to expect quick and harsh treatment. Norfield in particular and Fairfield in general entered the American Revolution thoroughly committed to the patriot cause. Neither the parish nor the town would be troubled with any significant dissent.<sup>21</sup>

Many Norfield residents served in the war. Since its establishment as a parish, Norfield had had its own company of militia. The existence of the militia company meant that the men of the parish had some passing acquaintance, at least, with military training. For many years, Daniel Andrews, the same man who was so active in the Norfield church, was the commander of the local company. He, like other militia officers, was elected by the men in his charge. Until 1768,





he and his successor, David Coley, held the rank only of lieutenant. Because the population of the area was small, the number of men in the company was correspondingly limited, and so the highest rank allowed the Norfield men was that of lieutenant. By 1768, the company had become sufficiently large to warrant the designation of a captain's company. In that year, David Coley became the company's first captain. Coley served for only one year in that rank, resigning in 1769 because of his age. His replacement was his son, Ebenezer, formerly company sergeant and at the time of his election twenty-eight years old.

In June, 1775, Ebenezer Coley submitted a pay list for his company. Included were the names of the fifty-six men who had reported for training the previous autumn. These men were:

<i>Aaron Boing</i>	<i>John Silliman Andrews</i>
<i>Albert Lockwood</i>	<i>Isaac Osborn</i>
<i>Brush Marvin</i>	<i>Jonathan Beers</i>
<i>Christopher Godfrey</i>	<i>Isaac Godfrey</i>
<i>Daniel Dunkin</i>	<i>John Gray</i>
<i>Daniel Godfrey</i>	<i>John Olmstead</i>
<i>David Morehouse</i>	<i>Iabez Sherrwood</i>
<i>David Osborn</i>	<i>Isaac Sturgis</i>
<i>Daniel Andrews, Jr.</i>	<i>Jonathan Godfrey</i>
<i>David Bulkeley</i>	<i>Jonathan Coley, Jr.</i>
<i>Daniel Morehouse, Jr.</i>	<i>James Sturgis</i>
<i>David Beers Jr.</i>	<i>Joseph Gray</i>
<i>David Morehouse, Jr.</i>	<i>John Lord</i>
<i>Ebenezer Squire, Jr.</i>	<i>Isaac Beers</i>
<i>Ebenezer Lockwood</i>	<i>Iabez Eliwood</i>
<i>Elijah Gray</i>	<i>Joel Gilbert</i>
<i>Edmund Ogden</i>	<i>Justus Gray</i>
<i>Ebenezer Guyer</i>	<i>Joseph Green, Jr.</i>
<i>Eli . . . Brown</i>	<i>Jeremiah Sturgis, Jr.</i>
<i>Ebenezer Bixby</i>	<i>Jonathan Cole</i>
<i>Eliphalet Gray</i>	<i>Joseph Gray, Jr.</i>
<i>Fanton Beers</i>	<i>Josiah Green</i>
<i>Gideon Lockwood</i>	<i>Jeremiah Johnson</i>
<i>Giliad Gray</i>	<i>Joseph Whitlock</i>
<i>Hezekiah Osborn</i>	<i>Elias Godfrey</i>
<i>Jonathan Squier</i>	<i>Lockwood Gray</i>
<i>Joseph Dickson</i>	<i>Moses Godfrey</i>
	<i>Moses Burr<sup>22</sup></i>

When news of the outbreak of fighting at Lexington and Concord reached Norfield, the men of the parish were quick to respond. Among those who immediately answered the alarm were Nathan Thorp, Daniel Morris, Jr., Ebenezer Squire, Joseph Green, and Shubal Gorham. Although these men served only a few days, the residents of Norfield were equally quick to respond to subsequent demands for troops. During the summer of 1776, after the British had abandoned Boston, General George Washington called for men to help defend New York City from an expected British attack. Norfield men who replied to this call included Elias Bennett, David Burr, Pinckney Beers, Fanton Beers, Isaac Godfrey, Jonathan Godfrey, David Morehouse, Jr., Edmund Ogden, Nathan and Thaddeus Thorp, Jonathan and Nathaniel Perry, Stephen Hurlbut, David Whitlock, and Joseph Green.

It was while they were en route to New York that some of the Norfield men first learned of Congress's decision for independence. These men had boarded ship in Fairfield and were on Long Island Sound when they encountered a vessel from New York. The commander of the transport hailed the ship and inquired about the situation in New York. The reply came through a speaking trumpet: Independence had been declared. Isaac Godfrey, who was on the transport, later admitted that he and many of his fellow soldiers had no real concept of what this news meant, either for themselves or for the new nation. From New York City, some of the Norfield men went on to Long Island. British forces had been gathering on Staten Island since the second week in July, and Washington decided that he must prevent the British from using Brooklyn Heights to bombard lower Manhattan. Eventually, the British attacked the American defenders on Long Island and forced Washington to order a retreat to New York City. Thaddeus Thorp of Norfield later recalled the evacuation of the wounded from Brooklyn Heights; that they were able to escape at all was a credit to Washington.

From Long Island, the British proceeded to New York City itself and, in the early autumn of 1776, occupied the city. Again included among the defenders were Norfield men. Although involved in various stages of the fighting, Isaac Godfrey, the man who had initially failed to comprehend the meaning of the Declaration of Independence, managed to escape harm. Nathaniel Perry did not fare so well. He fell into British hands and was sentenced to the prison ship *Jersey*. He never fully recovered from the privations suffered aboard that ship.



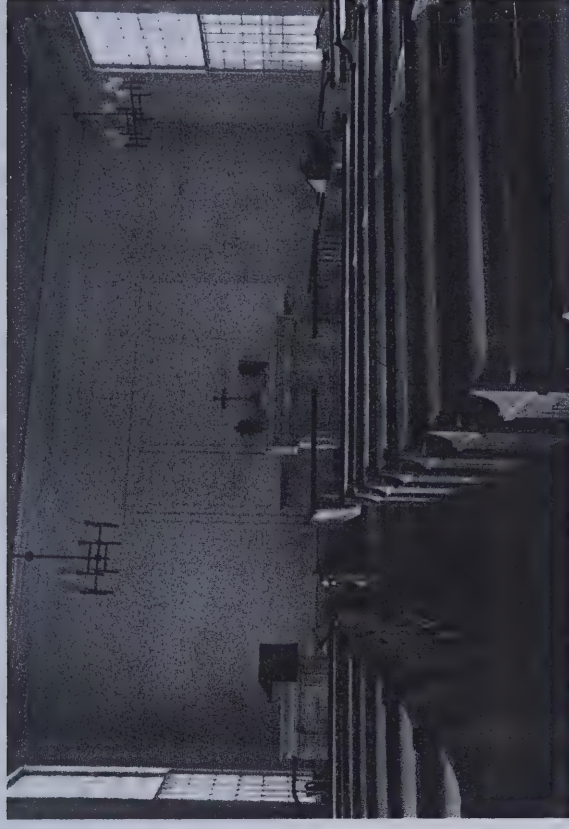


Hardly a battle was fought in the northern United States that did not involve Norfield men. Jonathan Godfrey and his nephew, Isaac, both fought in the Battle of White Plains. Jonathan was more fortunate than Isaac, for the younger man's good fortune ran out during this battle. He was one of the 2,818 American captives taken by the troops of Sir William Howe. This battle occurred in October, 1776. In December of the same year, Fanton Beers and Edmund Ogden crossed the Delaware River with General Washington and participated in the successful assault on Trenton, New Jersey. A year later, Beers would spend a grim winter with Washington at Valley Forge.

In the spring of 1777, the war struck close to Norfield. In April, General Howe ordered William Tryon, formerly governor of New York, to proceed to Danbury, there to destroy a cache of American stores and provisions. The expedition sailed from New York on the twenty-third and landed at what is now Westport's Compo Beach the following day. From the coast, Tryon and his men marched to Redding Ridge, Bethel, and eventually to Danbury. The line of march avoided Norfield; the road to Redding was a better road. On April 26 and 27, the raiders completed their mission in Danbury and began their return to Long Island Sound. At Ridgefield, the Americans challenged Tryon and his party. A pitched battle ensued. The militia, eager to fight under the command of Benedict Arnold of New Haven, performed well but failed to block the British withdrawal. Because the British troops were so close to Norfield, many men from that parish answered the alarm. Isaac Godfrey, who had been paroled after his capture at Fort Washington, fought at Ridgefield and helped to harass the British as they retreated to Norwalk. His uncle, Daniel Godfrey, was there, as well; in 1777, he was commander of the Norfield militia. Daniel Rowland was wounded at Ridgefield. Jonathan Cole, Jonathan Perry, Elias Bennett, and Joshua Adams were also among those who resisted Tryon.

Joseph Ogden, the brother of Edmund, and a miller in Norfield, was an enthusiastic patriot. He certainly would have been among the rebels at Ridgefield had he not enlisted in the Continental Army in January, 1777. Ogden was present at the American defeat at Germantown in October, 1777, and at the standoff at Monmouth in June, 1778, when General Charles Lee nearly brought disaster onto the American army by attempting to cut off the British rear guard, an attempt that resulted in his losing control of his men totally and having to retreat in disorder.

Of all the battles in which Norfield men participated, none was



*The interior of the Emmanuel church*

more important than the fighting that took place around Saratoga, New York, in October, 1777. Seventeen Norfield men, under the command of Captain Daniel Godfrey, participated in these actions. How such a large number of men from the parish came to be part of the American force at that time is a complicated story. It began in July, 1777, when a band of Indians fighting with the British seized two women hostages at Fort Edward in New York. The more important of these hostages was Jane McCrea, the daughter of a Presbyterian minister from New Jersey. She had gone to Fort Edward in hopes of seeing her fiancé, a Tory officer assigned to duty with General John Burgoyne. Her Indian captors were unimpressed by stories of her Tory connections and decided to take her to Fort Anne, also in New York and then controlled by the British. On the way, the Indians began to argue about who was to guard her. Eventually, one of the Indians shot her, scalped her, and took all her clothing. When Burgoyne heard of the incident, he ordered the arrest of the murderer but later pardoned him for fear of losing support among the local Indians. The murderer bore the suitably fierce name of Wyandot Panther.

This incident was nothing more than a minor atrocity in the midst of many greater atrocities. But the event became immensely important.





Jane McCrea was soon a martyr to the rebel cause. Her story appeared in newspapers throughout the northern United States. It was told in countless taverns and around innumerable dinner tables. Especially in New England, the story excited patriotic imaginations. When, in the fall of 1777, General Horatio Gates called upon the men of New York and New England to oppose Burgoyne's army, the response was unlike anything that American officers had seen before. By October 4, Gates had 7,000 men; by the seventh, he had 11,000. Among them were the Norfield men.

The details of the battle of Saratoga are too complex to be retold here. It is enough to say that it was a colossal American victory. Burgoyne surrendered to the Americans, and with him over 300 other officers, almost 400 noncommissioned officers, 197 musicians, and 4,836 of the rank and file. In addition, the Americans seized twenty-seven artillery pieces and 5,000 stand of small arms. One can imagine the humiliation of the British regulars as they passed in review before their captors. One British officer described the appearance of the American troops like the ones that Daniel Godfrey had brought from Norfield: "Not one of them was properly uniformed, but each man had on the clothes in which he goes to the field, to church or to the tavern. But they stood like soldiers, erect, with a military bearing which was subject to little criticism. All their guns were provided with bayonets, and the rifle-men had rifles. The people stood so still that we were greatly amazed. Not one fellow made a motion as if to speak to his neighbor; furthermore, nature had formed all the fellows who stood in rank and file, so slender, so handsome, so sinewy, that it was a pleasure to look at them and we were all surprised at the sight of such a finely built people. And their size! . . . The officers . . . wore very few uniforms and those they did wear were of their own invention. All colors of cloth . . . brown coats with sea-green facings, white linings and silver sword-knots; also gray coats with straw facings and yellow buttons were frequently seen. . . ."23

Whatever their appearance, these men, although they did not realize it, had turned the tide of the war. They would, however, better understand the importance of their victory when France responded to it by forming an alliance with the infant United States.

In the summer of 1779, war again came close to the fields and forests of Norfield. In July, William Tryon came back to Connecticut. This time, he came not to destroy military supplies but rather to destroy the morale of the Connecticut people. He and his commander, Sir Henry Clinton, believed that a series of hit-and-run raids would convince

Connecticut's people of the folly of further resistance. To accomplish his mission, Tryon struck first at New Haven. The attack came as a surprise, and the British were easily able to gain control of the town. But by the following day, July 6, a large force of militia had gathered to prevent any further penetration of the area. Among the militiamen who answered the alarm were Captain Daniel Godfrey and the men of his company.

From New Haven, Tryon traveled by sea to Fairfield. The town guard, which included Daniel Thorp of Norfield, first sighted the enemy ships as they approached the town about four o'clock on the morning of July 7. Isaac Jarvis, commander of the fort at Black Rock, ordered the alarm gun to be fired. Word of the raid spread quickly to all parts of Fairfield, and when the British finally struck, about three that afternoon, a considerable force of defenders had gathered. Daniel Godfrey and his company were again present. Nathan Lyon was working in Norfield when he heard of the attack. He rushed to Fairfield and joined the company of Captain Benajah Bennet, a Redding company. Both Bennet's and Godfrey's men remained on duty throughout the night of July 7-8 and "harrass'd [the British] very much at their embarkation, till afternoon when they all got on board. . . ." The militia was so energetic in its pursuit of Tryon's men that Sir George Collier, the commander of the British naval units supporting Tryon, had to dispatch gunboats to McKenzie Point in Fairfield to drive the militiamen back from the beach.<sup>24</sup>

Not only did Norfield men aid in the defense of this town, but Norfield itself provided a refuge for people fleeing Fairfield. Priscilla Burr, wife of Thaddeus, was an example. Shortly after hearing of the British raid on New Haven, she sent word to a friend in Norfield asking him to bring his team to town to help her remove some valuables from her home. She was afraid, she explained, that the British would come next to Fairfield. By the time the friend, his team, and wagon reached Mrs. Burr's home, the Tryon force had arrived. After loading the wagon with all it would carry, she headed off to Norfield to the home of Parson Sherwood. When she arrived, the Sherwood home was full of refugees from Fairfield and Green's Farms.

Tryon's departure left a toll of eighty-three houses, fifty-four barns, forty-seven shops and stores, two schools, two churches, the jail, and the courthouse all destroyed by fire. At the Fairfield town meeting of July 20, 1779, the town voted "to put about subscriptions to raise a sum of money, as a reward for any person or persons that shall captivate or take prisoner General William Tryon, who commanded





the British troops when they burnt this town. . . ."<sup>25</sup>

After the raid at Fairfield, the British fleet made its way to Huntington Bay, Long Island, there to receive fresh supplies, to make repairs on ships and equipment, and to fumigate the transports. But by July 10, the raiders were back at work. They struck next at Norwalk. Again, Norfield provided a refuge for town residents as well as defenders for the property they left behind. Daniel Godfrey and his men, nearly exhausted from the ordeal of the past days and nights at both New Haven and Fairfield, answered the alarm. Marching from Norfield to New Haven and then to Fairfield and holding off the British, these men had had little rest during the past week. Nathan Lyon had not even returned to Norfield after participating in the defense of Fairfield before he received word that the British had landed at Norwalk. His commanding officer, Captain Bennet, ordered him to ride to Greenfield Hill to collect ammunition. This he brought back to Norwalk; the ammunition was used in the counterassault on the British. On July 11, Tryon, having burned Norwalk, withdrew, much to the relief of its exhausted defenders.

By 1779, the war was all but over in the North. But Norfield men remained in the rebel army right until the end of the fighting. Joseph Elwood, for example, was not discharged until October 28, 1783, at the very end of the war. He had been serving under Captain William Munson in the Fourth Connecticut Regiment. Elwood had been at Yorktown on October 19, 1781, when Lord Charles Cornwallis, with 7,247 of his men, surrendered to General Washington. Elwood was among the American troops who, "though not all in uniform, nor their dress so neat, yet exhibited an erect, soldierly air and every countenance beamed satisfaction." And well satisfied Elwood must have been.<sup>26</sup>

Generally, the Norfield men in the Revolution served in Elwood's unit, the Fourth Connecticut Regiment. Norfield's Daniel Godfrey was commander of the Fourteenth Company of that regiment. Most Norfield men, of course, served in this company, but they were also well represented in the Sixth and Seventh Companies of the regiment.

But Norfield's service was not limited to the Fourth Regiment. Thomas Banks, who for many years would operate a tavern on Lyons Plains Road, served with Colonel Elisha Sheldon's Light Dragoons, one of the most famous and glamorous cavalry units in the Revolution. On the other hand, Trowbridge Crossman and David Smith never did anything more exciting than stand watch in the fort at Black Rock Harbor in Fairfield. David Squire lost both hands and an eye while on

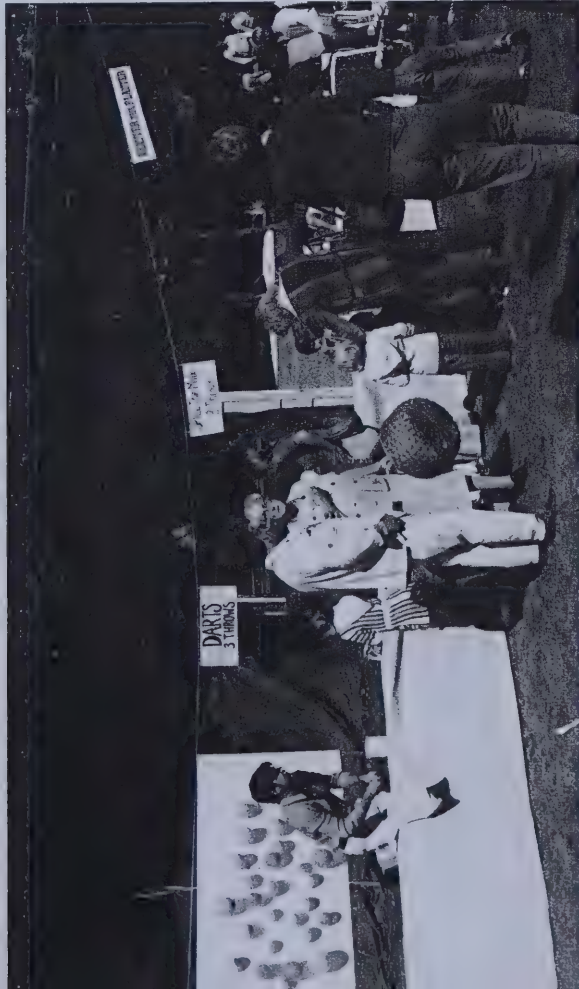
duty at the same post. Some Norfield men cast their lot with the fledgling American navy. Edmund Ogden served on board various vessels, in particular the *Bonhomme Richard*, under the command of John Paul Jones. This was the ship that Jones was commanding at the time of his famous battle with the British warship *Serapis*. Jones ultimately captured the *Serapis*.

If any single individual stood out for his military exploits during the War for American Independence, it was Daniel Godfrey. Born on March 30, 1739, Godfrey was from a staunchly patriotic family. His father, David, was too old to fight in the war, but his brother, Jonathan, as has been noted, participated in various engagements. No less a soldier was Isaac Godfrey, Daniel's nephew. Captain Godfrey fought in the war from beginning to end. He was chosen captain of the Fourteenth Company in 1776, and in that year, he and his men were on guard duty along the coast at Fairfield and Green's Farms. At that time, he had thirty-seven men under his command. In 1777, Godfrey fought at Ridgefield and was present at Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga and the following year was serving in the Continental Army. He and his men helped defend New Haven, Fairfield, and Norwalk from Tryon's raiders. Later in the year, he was on guard duty at Stratford and Green's Farms. In 1780, Washington issued a call for additional men; Godfrey responded and took his men into service in the Connecticut line. Although he was never the hero of any battle and never attained a rank higher than that of captain, Godfrey represented the sort of patriot who was willing to serve a cause in which he believed deeply whenever and wherever he was needed.

It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that all of Norfield's men were as eager as Godfrey to serve the ideal of American independence. The case of Jonathan Coley is an example of a less than enthusiastic patriot. He was called into service in 1778. Before answering the call, Coley and several other local draftees decided to have "a frolick at the house of John S. Andrews in Weston [Norfield], and late in the evening Capt. [Daniel] Godfrey and a fill of men, one of which was Joseph Meeker, surrounded the house for the purpose of taking the men who had been drafted, 7 or 8." As soon as the revelers realized what was happening, they began to flee. "Girls and all," Coley later stated, "fled through the doors and windows and scattered in all directions." All escaped except Coley, who was captured and taken to the home of Humphrey Ogden. But about dawn the next morning, when all of his captors had fallen asleep, Coley ran from the house in the direction of what he thought was freedom. But Joseph Meeker







*The 1978 Emmanuel church fair*

came after him "with a pistol in hand." Coley was so frightened he fled into the woods and escaped. Ultimately, he avoided service by hiring a substitute.<sup>27</sup>

Even among those who served, not all did so to the credit of Norfield. During the summer of 1776, when General Washington was preparing the defenses of New York City, he wrote to Governor Jonathan Trumbull of Connecticut, requesting that Connecticut militia be sent to join the defense. Trumbull ordered several regiments to proceed to New York. Among these was the Fourth Regiment, then commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Ichabod Lewis. Lewis ordered the company commanders in his regiment to bring their men to Fairfield on August 13 to embark for the voyage down the Sound. Lewis later reported to Governor Trumbull that "Capt. [Ebenezer] Cooley of Norfield did not attend. Liut. [Jonathan] Squire of Capt. Cooleys Company attended. Informed me that Capt. Cooley had never Read to his Company any orders that I had sent him, and utterly refused to take up arms against the Kings forces." Lewis then ordered Squire to call out the company and to join the regiment at Fairfield without delay.

For his disobedience, Coley was haled before the governor. What occurred during that interview has been lost to history, but on

November 18, 1776, General Samuel Huntington wrote to Lieutenant Colonel Abraham Gold, who had replaced Lewis as commander of the Fourth, and directed him to order the election of a new commanding officer for the Norfield company. According to Gold, Coley and **Ensign Michael Lockwood, also of Norfield**, had been "guilty of numbers of notorious crimes" against the United States "and in particular manner last summer when Orders came from the Capt. General of this State for the western Militia of this state to March for New York to the assistance of Genl. Washington..." Coley and Lockwood, Gold stated, declared that they "would not pay any further regard to the Orders" and that if they took up arms they "should be immediately damned; and ever since [have] continued to act conformable to the same principles, and a few days ago did declare that if . . . [they] did take up Arms it should be on the side of the King."<sup>28</sup>

The Norfield company did hold a new election and selected Daniel Godfrey to replace Coley. The company chose John Olmstead to become ensign in place of Lockwood. Whether Coley and Lockwood were truly loyalists is unclear; their disobedience may have been prompted by some specific grievance. In any case, neither man suffered further for the stand he took in 1776. This would lead one to believe that if they were loyal to George III, they remained quiet about it and took a neutral stand during the war.

Other individuals in Norfield were clearly loyalists. In December, 1776, Thaddeus Burr, sheriff of Fairfield County, complained that Samuel Lord and **David Morehouse, Jr.**, both from the parish, had, on November 28, attempted "to join the Enemies of this State and of the united States and with a View to join such Enemies did go from their Respective dwellings [and] did Travel toward the Sea Coast in order to Cross the Sound to Long Island in the State of New York where said Enemies then were and now are..." Burr also charged that Lord and Morehouse used "their Influence to persuade and Induce one Isaac Sturges of Norfield Parish in said Fairfield and sundry other Persons to the Complainant unknown to join said Enemy..." All of this, asserted Burr, was "against the Peace of this State destructive of the Safety thereof and is against the Form Force and Effect of one Statute of Law of this State entitled an Act for the Punishment of High Treason and other Atrocious Crimes against the State."<sup>29</sup>

Justice of the Peace Jonathan Sturges heard Burr's complaint and ordered Lord, Morehouse, and Levi Morehouse, an accomplice from Ridgfield, to appear before him on December 3, 1776. At the conclusion of this appearance, Sturges decided that "they each of them are





guilty and have thereupon Considered that they each of them give Bond (with Surety) of £500 for his appearance before the Superior Court . . . to answer said Complaint. . . ." Because they could not provide the bond, the men "were by a proper Warrant ordered to Gaol there to be held untill Lawfully discharged."<sup>30</sup>

Ironically, two days after this hearing, the men whom Lord and the Morehouses had encouraged to go to Long Island with them made it to the enemy on their own. These men were Isaac Sturges—mentioned in the unit—Thaddeus Squire, David Osborn, Lockwood Gray, Gilead Gray, Daniel Morehouse, Thaddeus Sturgis, Samuel Lockwood, and four slaves. All were from the Norfield parish.

But Lord and Daniel Morehouse paid for their loyalism. In February, 1777, the Superior Court found the two guilty of "Atrocious Crimes" against the state and sentenced them to serve a year in the jail at Norwich and to pay the costs of the prosecution. The men never served their entire sentences, because, at the beginning of 1778, a group of neighbors, including such important local figures as Benjamin Dean and Increase Bradley, petitioned for their release, promising to "have a careful watch over them." The petitioners also stated that many of those who fled to Long Island subsequently returned, disillusioned with the enemy. The case was thus closed. Loyalism was subsequently not an important issue in the parish.<sup>31</sup>

The existence of a few loyalists in Norfield encouraged zealous patriots to keep a watch for anything that might be regarded as suspicious behavior. When danger was close at hand, these individuals were especially active. For example, following Tryon's raid on Danbury in April, 1777, several Norfield residents were accused of aiding the enemy during the attack. David Adams, Jr., Squier Adams, Gideon and Albert Lockwood, and David Coley, Jr., were all charged with "being inimical and unfriendly to the Liberties and Privileges of this and the rest of the United States of America." Their accusers claimed that each of these men "did at Norwalk . . . on the twenty eighth Day of April A.D. 1777 unlawfully wickedly and Traiterously join himself to the Army of the King of Great Britain then in Norwalk aforesaid at open War with and acting in an Hostile manner against said States. . . ." Furthermore, their accusers asserted that each did "unlawfully and Traiterously aid and assist the said Army in their Hostile Operations against said States."<sup>32</sup>

Apparently, these men were less than enthusiastic patriots, but also it is apparent that their only crime was to wander over to the Wilton parish to watch the British troops return from Danbury. While they



*St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church, completed in 1966*

were waiting to satisfy their curiosity, they encountered Jabez Lockwood, the loyalist brother of Gideon and Albert. Jabez was one of Tryon's party. Evidently, the Norfield men spoke briefly with him, and during this short conversation he warned them to return to their homes. This they did, but not before they had been seen by some of their vehemently patriotic neighbors. Undoubtedly irritated by the refusal of the Lockwoods and the others to aid in the defense of their homes, these neighbors assumed that the Norfield men were playing the same traitorous role that Jabez was.

These men were briefly imprisoned, but because of the weakness of the evidence against them, they were shortly released. David Coley, Jr., was a miller, and Parson Sherwood, Daniel Andrews, Benjamin Dean, Ephraim Lyon, Daniel Duncan, David Morehouse, and Humphrey Ogden, all of Norfield, attested to the essential role he played in Norfield's economic life and urged his release. They assured the court that he was not an enemy of his country. Gideon Lockwood later enlisted in the Continental Army, and his brother, Albert, served the Connecticut militia as a teamster. The two Adamses took an oath of



fidelity to the state of Connecticut and also pledged to work as teamsters for the militia. Possibly these five men were lukewarm in their support of the Revolution, but more likely they were victims of the doubt and fear that existed in Connecticut after each of Tryon's raids.

One other important result of the American Revolution for Norfield was the coming of Freemasonry to the area. During the winter of 1778-1779, General Israel Putnam and his men were encamped at Redding. Among the officers in his brigade were several who had been active in the American Union Lodge of Masons; it had been organized among the Connecticut Line during the siege of Boston three years before. These men brought the ideas of Freemasonry to Fairfield County. Although it would be eighteen years later before William Heron, Nathan Wheeler, and Benjamin Hall would finally establish the Ark Lodge in Weston, the steps leading to that development began in the War for Independence.

Norfield's role in the American Revolution was hardly momentous. But the parish certainly did its part. For every Samuel Lord or Jabez Lockwood in Norfield, there were literally a dozen Daniel Godfreys or Thaddeus Thorps, men ready to answer the calls of General Washington or Governor Trumbull for soldiers. At the same time, Samuel Sherwood was composing convincing sermons for American independence. In the process, Sherwood, as well as the war itself, was focusing Norfield's attention more and more closely on political questions and diverting the parish from theological and church concerns. This change in emphasis would mean that the parish of Norfield would soon become totally subservient to the town of Weston.

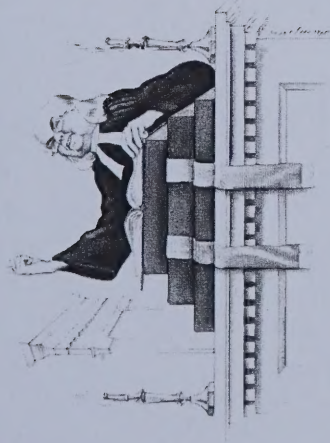
## NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. Again, this chapter has profited by my reading of Richard L. Bushman's *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765* (Cambridge, 1967) and Kenneth A. Lockridge's *A New England Town, The First Hundred Years: Dedham, Massachusetts, 1636-1736* (New York, 1970).
2. Bushman described the transformation of Puritans into Yankees as well as anyone has.
3. Weston-Norfield Congregational Church Records, Connecticut State Library, II, 31.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., I, 1.
6. Ibid., 1-2.

7. The only significant body of Sherwood sermons is located in the Samuel Sherwood Papers in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. These quotations are from a sermon dated August, 1763.
8. Ibid., January, 1771, and July, 1777.
9. Ibid., July, 1777.
10. Weston-Norfield Congregational Church Records, II, 29.
11. Ibid., 28.
12. Ibid., 10.
13. Ibid., 26.
14. Ibid., 4, 23.
15. Ibid., 35, 42.
16. Ibid., 10.
17. Ibid., 5-6.
18. Samuel Sherwood, *A Sermon, Containing Scriptural Instructions to Civil Rulers . . . Delivered on the Public Fast, August 31, 1774* (New Haven, 1774).
19. Samuel Sherwood, *The Church's Flight into the Wilderness . . . Delivered on a Public Occasion, January 17, 1776* (New York, 1776).
20. Sherwood Papers, October, 1776.
21. Fairfield Town Records, Town Meeting Minutes, III, 546-547.
22. Connecticut Archives, Revolutionary War, Series I, II, 48-49, Connecticut State Library.
23. R. W. Pettengill, ed., *Letters from America, 1776-1779* (Boston, 1924), 110.
24. Quoted in Thomas J. Farnham, "The Day the Enemy Was in Town: The British Raids on Connecticut, July, 1779," *Journal of the New Haven Colony Historical Society* XXIV (Summer, 1976), 48.
25. Ibid., 51.
26. James Thacher, *Military Journal of the American Revolution* (Hartford, 1862), 346.
27. Donald L. Jacobus, *History and Genealogy of the Families of Old Fairfield*, 3 volumes (New York, 1912), III, 208. Jacobus is the source of most of my information about the service records of individual soldiers.
28. Connecticut Archives, Revolutionary War, Series II, XII, 2240, 2243, Connecticut State Library; Ichabod Lewis to Jonathan Trumbull, August 15, 1776, Jonathan Trumbull Papers, V, 148, Connecticut State Library.
29. Connecticut Archives, Revolutionary War, Series I, XIII, 214-216, Connecticut State Library.
30. *Connecticut v. Lord*, Superior Court Records, Fairfield County, Confiscated Estates and Loyalist Cases, 1770-1789, Connecticut State Library.
31. Ibid.
32. *Connecticut v. Coley*, ibid., Connecticut Archives, Revolutionary War, Series I, XIII, 258-260.







## THE PARISH BECOMES A TOWN

1783 / 1787

*"The Privileges of freemen to elect rulers, enact law, and lay taxes"*

Although the American Revolution had begun a process that would eventually weaken the Norfield church and virtually eradicate the Norfield parish, the people of Norfield in 1783 were still oblivious of this. The war was now over, and supposedly life would return to normal. The fact that they had their own parish meant that Norfield people had much more control over their own affairs than they had had when they were merely a geographic section of Fairfield. They now elected their own constables, tithingmen, listers, surveyors of highways, as well as parish officers. They no longer felt so completely under the thumb of men who lived miles away and who were little interested in the problems of the outlivers.

The war had barely ended when the people of Norfield decided that they had to do something about the wretched condition of their meetinghouse, which remained unfinished and was an embarrassment to the parish. Furthermore, its location was unsatisfactory to many Norfield residents. On November 4, 1784, the parish meeting voted to "Chus a Comtt. from other Sociaties to look into the Situation

of Norfield Sosiaty respecting the Situation of the Inhabitants, and the plase where the meating house now stands & if the sd. house does not stand in the right Plase to Comidate the half of the Inhabitants of sd. Sosiaty that sd. Court should set a Stake for sd. Purpus, where they thought the meeting house ought to Stand Considering the Situation of the ground and the Situation of the Inhabitants of Said Society." Why the site of the meetinghouse was so intolerable is unclear. Perhaps it was just inconveniently located. Or perhaps its location hindered in one way or another the development of the parish.<sup>1</sup>

The parish meeting then went on to decide that if the committee believed the meetinghouse ought to be moved, the committee should proceed to select a site. The parish would then recommend the site to the County Court, which would make the final decision. This question must have been fiercely debated, an extremely rare occurrence in the parish meeting, for the vote on the question was recorded: "It is to be noted that 30 is in the Vote & 11 against it." The minutes of the parish meetings almost never indicated the outcome of a vote, probably because most questions were decided by consensus. The decision to list the vote clearly indicated that no consensus could be had; the parish had to resort to the unhappy device of allowing those with more votes to inflict a decision upon a reluctant minority—not a welcome situation.<sup>2</sup>

Since the committee recommended that the meetinghouse be relocated, the parish meeting voted a month later to "Pull Down the old Meating house, and so much as will Dew to erect a new house." The meeting of March 21, 1785, imposed a tax of threepence per pound of assessed real property to pay for the new building. John Gray, Thomas Banks, Ebenezer Coley, Daniel Godfrey, Benjamin Dean, Ebenezer Bixby, Eliphalet Coley, Nathan Adams, Samuel Rowland, and Zebulon Fanton formed the committee charged with its construction.<sup>3</sup>

The location of the second meetinghouse was very close to the site of the present Norfield church, but the sites were not identical. The second meetinghouse eventually stood slightly northeast of the existing structure. It was built on land donated by Samuel Rowland to the inhabitants of the parish "so long as the said Inhabitants shall maintain a House of Publick Worship thereon. . . ." Rowland made his gift on February 2, 1785. Actually, on October 16, 1784, Thaddeus Burr of Fairfield had given the parish a piece of land "for a place of Parrade to do Military Duty on and build a Meeting House and School House thereon, as the People Shall think proper. . . ." The residents of Norfield used Burr's land to conduct militia drills and used Rowland's gift for







from the point to the rear thereof, there we measured the width of them  
 as of one long lth and the manner of me measuring the width  
 of 1. Lth and 1. Whight highways for the greatest exactness was  
 by a red pole 6 feet in length 1. Pole being levelled  
 on all uneven land by a square and placed line and well found 1.  
 long lth and 1. Whight highways to be in width as here following  
 they are particularly set down viz, beginning next the right side  
 of the Mile of Commons  
 Peter Clapham 27. 5-0  
 Goodwins 5-3-0  
 John Brouder 23-12-5  
 John Hargreaves 32-6-6  
 Highway 4  
 John Sibley 21-5-1  
 John Applegates 5-10-3  
 Thos Lyons 10-10-9  
 Samuel Duckes 11-1-9  
 James Biers 27-1-11  
 The Barbours 16-10-6  
 Sam<sup>r</sup> Smith 18-5-4  
 John Barlow bar. 15-9-3  
 Cleaveland m<sup>r</sup> 14-6  
 Robert Mumsey 19-6-9  
 Dan Lowwood } into one 51. 15-1  
 Sam<sup>r</sup> Waid }  
 John Smith  
 Highway 4  
 Thos. Bydens } 62. 5-6  
 Daniel C. Frost  
 now called Applegates  
 Jos. Lockwoods 24. 15-15  
 Robert Bradburn 24. 2-28  
 John Green 27. 14-45  
 (

from the point to the rear thereof, there we measured the width of them  
 as of one long lth and the manner of me measuring the width  
 of 1. Lth and 1. Whight highways for the greatest exactness was  
 by a red pole 6 feet in length 1. Pole being levelled  
 on all uneven land by a square and placed line and well found 1.  
 long lth and 1. Whight highways to be in width as here following  
 they are particularly set down viz, beginning next the right side  
 of the Mile of Commons  
 Peter Clapham 27. 5-0  
 Goodwins 5-3-0  
 John Brouder 23-12-5  
 John Hargreaves 32-6-6  
 Highway 4  
 John Sibley 21-5-1  
 John Applegates 5-10-3  
 Thos Lyons 10-10-9  
 Samuel Duckes 11-1-9  
 James Biers 27-1-11  
 The Barbours 16-10-6  
 Sam<sup>r</sup> Smith 18-5-4  
 John Barlow bar. 15-9-3  
 Cleaveland m<sup>r</sup> 14-6  
 Robert Mumsey 19-6-9  
 Dan Lowwood } into one 51. 15-1  
 Sam<sup>r</sup> Waid }  
 John Smith  
 Highway 4  
 Thos. Bydens } 62. 5-6  
 Daniel C. Frost  
 now called Applegates  
 Jos. Lockwoods 24. 15-15  
 Robert Bradburn 24. 2-28  
 John Green 27. 14-45  
 (

and then we proceeded to the first cross highway on the 1. side of the  
 Mile of Commons which began by a square and placed line and well found 1.  
 long lth and 1. Whight highways to be in width as here following  
 they are particularly set down viz, beginning next the right side  
 of the Mile of Commons  
 Peter Clapham 27. 5-0  
 Goodwins 5-3-0  
 John Brouder 23-12-5  
 John Hargreaves 32-6-6  
 Highway 4  
 John Sibley 21-5-1  
 John Applegates 5-10-3  
 Thos Lyons 10-10-9  
 Samuel Duckes 11-1-9  
 James Biers 27-1-11  
 The Barbours 16-10-6  
 Sam<sup>r</sup> Smith 18-5-4  
 John Barlow bar. 15-9-3  
 Cleaveland m<sup>r</sup> 14-6  
 Robert Mumsey 19-6-9  
 Dan Lowwood } into one 51. 15-1  
 Sam<sup>r</sup> Waid }  
 John Smith  
 Highway 4  
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 Daniel C. Frost  
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